

*BEST PRACTICES IN HUMAN SERVICES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE*

Edited by

Janet Hagen

Alfred T. Kisubi

Human Service Leadership Program

College of Education and Human Services

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh



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# Contents

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Foreword: About Human Services Educators and Providers

Chapter 1: Human Services as a Harm Reduction and Community-Building Cannon in the  
Global ICT Age  
Alfred Kisubi & Janet Hagen..... 1

## **Part I: Community-Building and Student Learning**

Chapter 2: BRIDGE: Bridging Resources in DC to Guide and Educate  
Leo Goldstein, Natalie Kaplan, & Honey Nashman..... 50

Chapter 3: Youth Social Enterprise: A University-Community Partnership Planting Seeds of  
Change in Alaska  
Michael Sobocinski, Eleanor Andrews, & Dennis McMillian..... 66

Chapter 4: Using Service-learning to Develop Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Empowerment,  
and Leadership in Online Human Services Graduate Students  
Denise Sommers..... 90

Chapter 5: Best Practices in Online Pedagogy and Programming in Human Services Education  
Carl Renold..... 112

Chapter 6: Beyond Public School: Options for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities  
Mary Handley..... 127

## **Part II: Harm Reduction through Professional and Self-Advocacy**

### Chapter 7: Harm Reduction and Human Services

Benjamin Shepard..... 140

### Chapter 8: The Women’s Bean Project: From a Hill of Beans to a Productive Life

Tara Tull & Mathew Nalty..... 160

### Chapter 9: Education on the Immigrant Trail: Borderlands of Human Service

Donald Hones..... 190

### Chapter 10: Workforce and Independent Living Skills Training for Individuals with High

Functioning Autism or Asperger’s Disorder Who Exhibit Savant Skills or  
Giftedness: A Pilot Program’s Outcomes

David Crowe, Shahrokh Shafaie, G. Elaine Beussink, Allen Lincoln, David Krug, Jana  
Rodgers, Alison Blake, & Carol Statler..... 200

### Chapter 11: Assessing and Teaching Self-Advocacy: A Pathway to Increasing Client

Empowerment and Self Efficacy

Barry Stephens & Mary Anne Templeton..... 239

## **Part III: Application of Arts and Humanities to Human Services**

### Chapter 12: Metaphorical Communication: A Universal Tool for Enhancing

Communication and Facilitating Change

Barry Stephens, Melanie Drake Wallace, & Martin Cortez Wesley..... 261

### Chapter 13: Approaching Children’s Fears Through Bibliotherapy: A Classroom-based

Intervention

Maria Paparoussi, Eleni Andreou, & Vassiliki Gkouni..... 284

## **Part IV: Best Practices: An International Perspective**

Chapter 14: Empowering Girls and Women in the Developing World: Local Solutions to Global Issues

Bahira Sherif Trask & Donald Unger..... 301

Chapter 15: Sustainable Development: Entrepreneurship Education and A Possible Solution to Unemployment among School Dropouts: A Ugandan Perspective

Sr. Prisca Kobusingye.....319

Chapter 16: Improving Inner-City Public Schools and Communities through Education Organizing

Nicole Mutén..... 364

## **Part V: Professional Philosophy and Etiquette**

Chapter 17: Relational Needs in the Classroom

Thomas McElfresh..... 375

Chapter 18: *Muntu* (Human Being) as *Muntu*: The Best Practice of Humanism in Human Services: Inferences from the Monograph

Alfred Kisubi..... 396

## Illustrations

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### TABLES

Table 4.1 Level of Enhancement of Collaboration and Leadership by Working in a Group.....	98
Table 4.2 Level of Enhancement of Collaboration, Feeling Empowered and Critical Thinking By Using the Reflective Journal.....	101
Table 4.3 Level of Enhancement of Collaboration and Feeling Empowered by Participating in the Service-learning Project.....	103
Table 5.1 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Human Services Education.....	115
Table 15.1 Level of Education of Small-Scale Entrepreneurs (SSEs).....	340
Table 15.2 Carpenters as Small-Scale Entrepreneurs (SSEs).....	342
Table 15.3 Graduated Dropouts in Carpentry Business.....	344

### FIGURES

Figure 5.1 Technology Continuum in Education.....	113
Figure 5.2 Technology Continuum in Education.....	116
Figure 12.1 One-Liners.....	273
Figure 12.2 Frozen Stories/Word Pictures.....	275
Figure 13.1 Students Emotions about the Hero's Death.....	292
Figure 13.2 Scores on the Initial and the Final Questionnaires Concerning Students' Self-Reported Fear of Death/Bodily Injuries.....	293
Figure 13.3 Scores on the Initial and the Final Questionnaires Concerning Students' Self-Reported Fear of Dark/Ghosts.....	294

Figure 13.4 A Student’s Drawing that Represents Fear of Death/Bodily Injuries..... 295  
Figure 13.5 A Student’s Drawing that Represents Fear of Dark/Ghosts.....295

APPENDICES

Appendix 10A: Examples of National and International Workforces and Independent Living  
Skills Training Programs.....232

Appendix 10B: Protocol for Identification and Screening of the Young Adults with  
Savant Skills Meetings Criteria for High Functioning Autism or Asperger’s  
Syndrome.....236

Appendix 10C: Procedures for Implementation..... 238

Appendix 11A: Perceptions of Self- Advocacy - Questionnaire and Interview Protocol.....249

Appendix 11B: Self –Advocacy Behavioral Indicator..... 252

Appendix 11C: Synthesized Model for Teaching Self-Advocacy.....254

Appendix 11D: An Example of Implementation – Synthesized Model for Teaching Self-  
Advocacy..... 258

## Foreword

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### About Human Service Educators and Providers

Throughout their history, human services education and practice have enjoyed a vigorous eclectic philosophy. This pragmatism has its roots in many disciplines and in the warp and woof of contemporary human service agencies and local, state, national, and global society. The dominant goal of human service education is that of empowering the students, who in turn will go out to empower those that they will serve and help during their careers as human service professionals. The primary goal of the human service provider is to advocate and empower the consumer to realize his or her potential in a democratic participatory rather than a draconian helper-helped relationship.

Applying an international perspective and comparative framework, this monograph explores examples of best practices contrived by human service educators and practitioners to reduce the harm to people afflicted by poverty, mental illness, and developmental disabilities.

The best practices instanced here aim at empowering the individual and community to meet everyone's basic human needs, to tackle social problems, and to influence better public policies, welfare programs, and services in different countries. Highlighting social conditions and human rights issues of the disadvantaged and marginal populations worldwide, this monograph critically examines the historical, economic, and socio-political processes that shape social welfare, including globalization, international diversity, and stratification, as well as the challenges for securing social justice and international cooperation.

The monograph is not supposed to be a user's manual, but rather a thought-provoking inventory that extends horizons and perspectives and, as its title implies, provides the kind of

insights and understandings essential for best practices of successful intervention in human services. The main thrust is to give an inventory of alternative contemporary solutions to human suffering and their consequences for many facets of human service practice and its ethics and philosophy.

This monograph also bears witness to the fact that human services people are, philosophically speaking, humanists, seeking to promote the welfare of humankind by eliminating pain and suffering. To the homeless we are hope of shelter; to the hungry we are hope of food; to the lonely we are hope of friendship; to the alcoholic or drug dependent we are hope of recovery; to the depressed we are hope of discovery of self-worth and purpose; to the physically, sexually, emotionally, and spiritually abused we are hope as a humanistic domestic abuse shelter and home; to the run-away or abandoned kid we are hope in our home away from home; to those who struggle with skepticism we are hope in our example and life examined by empirical investigation and the arts. Human service workers are the empowering professionals:

## **We're a New Zeitgeist!**

Caring intellectuals, not hackers  
We're human service workers  
Educators and providers  
We envision an empire of knowledge  
And haven of service  
Where the *zeitgeist is to be ready on demand*  
To root out ignorance in every land  
To reduce harm in every hand  
For everyone, whatever time and clime  
To *jettison* all burdens of poverty  
Lease, annex, or buy land along the coast of clean-out rivers  
Leading to the sea of truth and reason  
We love fertile land to plant the *chicory* seeds of empirical research  
Watch them sprout and grow in each *woolgathering* mind.  
For every *jerkwater* land we're willing to spend 500 bars of tobacco,  
Three barrels of rum, five casks of powder, five umbrellas,  
ten iron posts, and ten pairs of shoes and several credit cards.  
So ignorance is bought out for good and all!  
So disease due to poverty is routed out at our call!  
We're caring intellectuals, a new *zeitgeist*  
In corridors of learning and haste  
In non-profits we medicate and baste  
We love standing tall on mountainous podiums  
Persuading our listeners with good deeds  
By pointing a pistol of expertise at their heads  
And firing them with the wisdom of academe  
Or booming the canon of advocacy for self-esteem  
We're prepared to use force of a pen or PC  
To extend knowledge to all territories at our behest  
North, South, East West, all are best.

## **We're a New Zeitgeist!**

- Alfred Kisubi

## Preface

---

Council for Standards in Human Service Education monographs are prepared by human service professionals and educators and published by the CSHSE. The primary objective of the series is to facilitate the transfer of teaching, prevention, and intervention technology between and among researchers, administrators, policymakers, educators, and providers in the public and private sectors. The content of state-of-the-art conferences, reviews of innovative or exemplary programming models and review of evaluative studies are important elements of CSHSE's information dissemination mission. This publication is a report by the editors of human service best practices in the US and in other countries, thus giving it its global perspective. The presentations herein are those of the authors and may not necessarily reflect the opinions, official policy, or position of CSHSE.

The Human Services major is designed for those who plan to commit their professional lives to serving people. The program is developed through the guidance of the Council for Standards in Human Services Education and the National Organization for Human Services (NOHS) to meet the demands for skills and knowledge by professionals in the field. Major course work includes a core of classes focusing on skills, knowledge, and values of the profession. The major requires a solid foundation in the liberal arts, which emphasizes the need to think critically about issues and diversity in our world. Students are required to consider and select a focus area within Human Services such as advocacy, children and families, corrections, gerontology, or mental health. An internship requirement provides students with educationally focused opportunities that integrate academic content with field experience. Internship provides a valuable learning experience while preparing students to make significant contributions to the

community and to those with whom they will work. For example, a student, during an internship at the Probation and Parole Board in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, used relevant family systems theory, practiced process recording, and applied relevant life cycle developmental theory in interviewing clients about personal and family problems affecting their parole. She also practiced understanding of cultural differences and environmental influential behaviors when assessing clients and their needs. She identified information to be collected for problem solving and gathered relevant human behavior to make assessments. With her colleagues, she negotiated and planned interventions.

Students in human services are preparing for careers at local, state, national, and international levels in organizations such as, but not limited to, welfare agencies, church ministries, community development programs, youth and adult group homes, nursing homes, senior centers, retirement centers, poverty assistance programs, governmental agencies, law enforcement agencies, courts, probation offices, community correction programs, united national multilateral specialized agencies (such as UNICEF, UNHCR, etc.), and bilateral organizations such as the Peace Corps and USAID. They can work as staff of voluntary associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and religious, secular, and support agencies operating at the national and international level. Their work may include direct management and responsibility for social and health care programs run and managed by national governments. They can also be engaged in administering aid, either in developing and transitional countries or in donor countries, or be expatriates working, or preparing to work, with social development programs in other countries. They may also work in community action groups and other civil society organizations, and be engaged in education and raising of awareness on development and justice.

For example, a student who recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in human services typifies the path taken by some non-traditional students to a career in human services. His regular human service work dates back to 1988, when he worked in food services at the Hilltop Juvenile Institution in Kansas City, Missouri, and spanned various positions and agencies before he returned to college. This wide experience allowed him to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that appear to be required in all human service work. In various corrections institutions and human services agencies, working either as food service worker, job coach, or house manager, he selected interventions which promoted growth and goal attainment for his clients. In many cases he was able to conduct competent problem analyses and to select those strategies, services, or interventions that were appropriate to helping clients attain desired outcomes. Interventions may have included assistance, referral, advocacy, or direct counseling. This long road to human services landed him a job in a faith-based international adoption agency, where he spends a lot of time flying to different countries to facilitate the adoption process, working with authorities from the children's native countries and with adopting parents in the US.

This publication is one of the first in the series of CSHSE monographs that makes available the latest information on promising approaches (best practices) to harm reduction, advocacy, and social entrepreneurship. We publish this monograph with the expectation that providing the best new knowledge from research and demonstration efforts will promote better primary prevention, harm reduction, social enterprise, and advocacy programs. *Best Practices in Human Services: A Global Perspective* summarizes the rapidly growing body of knowledge about the nature of poverty and deprivation, social inequality, and the role of civil society and human service work in advocating participatory, bottom-up, social, and economic human

development, especially for high-risk constituencies. We are pleased to publish this report on behalf of the CSHSE, all our colleagues who have subscribed to the monograph, and all those here and abroad who are engaged in human services education and practice.

We publish it, however, with a note of caution. Although it is unquestionably true that over the last century and half “modernization,” “development” and globalization have improved the lives of many people around the world, in practice many have been left out in the rain. In spite of the assumed triumph over communism and subsequent penchant for capitalism around the world, capitalism in this age of globalization still has not worked for the poor in either the North or the South. The question remains: What alternative can be offered to globalizing capitalism? The traditional answer is a “socialist transformation.” As this too looks unfeasible, southern thinkers have been mooted the possibility of disengaging from the international system and promoting development at the grassroots level, in local community organizations. This movement is popular in India, Sri Lanka, and many African countries. The nonprofits of the North are also picking up the tab, when for-profit organizations and governments do not deliver.

This report stresses common international themes for bottom-up harm reduction and prevention. It is important that we understand these broad, common concepts and thereby take the first step toward effective harm reduction. However, we also need to recognize that along with the national and international impact of socioeconomic problems, there are also important differences (not dealt with in this general report) which powerfully influence particular communities in the US and in the countries mentioned here. With this perspective, we support this monograph as an important new step toward the CSHSE goal of reducing harm among people at risk.

## CHAPTER1

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# HUMAN SERVICES AS A HARM REDUCTION COMMUNITY-BUILDING CANON IN THE GLOBAL ICT AGE

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### Abstract

This monograph fills in a gap in the scholarship and research literature about best practices in human services, is inspired by humanism, and is cast in a global perspective. Collectively, the authors are inspired by a spirit of humanism and acknowledge that (a) grassroots, primary, stakeholder-driven, community-based organizations are products of harm reduction movements; (b) participatory planning by human service educators and practitioners enhances interpersonal relationships and hence increases the chances of having interesting and effective programs; (c) human service educators and practitioners, as humanists, should engage in the harm reduction movements and plan civil initiatives, such as social enterprises and service-learning programs.

## **Introduction**

Human services is a harm reduction, community-building canon in this global information age. Critically examining the global development project as it is promoted through the globalization of neo-liberal, top-down, trickledown capitalism reveals the task ahead for human services. Tackling the effects of globalization on the lives of all the socioeconomic classes, particularly the creation of a permanent underclass in the United States and the abysmal impoverishment of the vulnerable in the developing world, is a colossal task for everyone in community harm reduction work.

Like Joseph Stiglitz (2003), we believe that the current institutions and processes of political and economic globalization have failed to deliver economic and human growth to the poor of the world, triggering many of the most difficult issues facing human service educators and program managers in NGOs in the developed and developing worlds.

Informed by a 30-year study of the dynamics and statics of the world order driven by global economic and political policies, we wish to explain the vast shortcomings of the globalization of neoliberal economic policy, which has created a world in which a few nations and individuals are rich and becoming richer and the poor are more vulnerable and getting worse.

We postulate that socioeconomic trends due to the globalization of information computer technology driven economic and political forces have led to four major implications for education and human service managers: (a) the need for participative structures at corporate and civil society levels, (b) the multinational corporate rather than the sovereign nation, (c) global technological culture, and (d) the entrepreneurial culture (also at corporate and civil society levels). Stiglitz (2003) argues that the global corporate nation, driven by a grandiose “development” or “modernization” project sowed around the world, like a mustard seed, by the

neo-liberal vehicle dubbed “globalization,” benefits the elite by alienating the poor. On the other hand, civil society, driven by the humanist, harm-reduction development philosophy, does the opposite in that it is a bottom-up, participative, grassroots movement inspired by Schumacher’s Buddhist economics, which proposes, “Small is beautiful: economics as if people matter” (Schumacher, 1999, p. 1). This chapter thus gives the monograph its subtitle, “A Global Perspective,” by setting it in global development theory and giving examples of some development projects from various countries in Africa and Asia.

### **Definition of the Global Issues**

James D. Wolfensohn, former president of the World Bank, admitted, “Our [the World Bank’s] goal in development must be to reduce the disparities across and within countries. The key development challenge of our time is the challenge of inclusion” (Todaro & Smith, 2009, p. 2). He was probably measuring the ‘standard of living’ by the amount of annual consumption, assuming that a person who consumes more is ‘better off’ than a person who consumes less. Schumacher (1999) states:

A Buddhist economist would consider this approach excessively irrational: since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption. The less toil there is, the more time and strength is left for artistic creativity. Modern economics, on the other hand, considers consumption to be the sole end and purpose of all economic activity. It is clear, therefore, that Buddhist economics must be very different from the economics of modern materialism, since the Buddhist sees the essence of civilization not in a multiplication of wants but in the purification of human character. Character, at the same

time, is formed primarily by man's work. And work, properly conducted in conditions of human dignity and freedom, blesses those who do it and equally their products. (p. 2)

The primary goal of human service is to tackle the "challenge of inclusion" and help accomplish the unfinished task of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ENRON, and other enormous but sickly financial institutions. Consequently, when we think of economics we go beyond consumption and focus on the inherent human dignity and freedom rendered in any economic activity to those subject to it.

### **Buddhist Economics vs. Neoliberal Economic Liberalization**

Canterbury (2007) laments the loss of self-reliance and sovereignty that developing countries have suffered in the wake of multinational globalization. He argues that many southern countries (in Latin America, Africa, and Asia) began the twentieth century as colonies of the northern countries (in North America, Europe, and Japan) and ended it as politically independent nations, under U.S. and U.S.S.R. hegemony until the end of the Cold War, and hence under U.S. hegemony in the twenty-first century. The transition from colonial status to independent nationhood placed development on national, regional, and international agendas characterized by neo-colonialism, nationalism, and neoliberal economic liberalization. Though they failed to deliver "development" to many southern countries and to the poor in the North, the neo-colonial and nationalist approaches (such as the "plantation economy" model that emerged in the Caribbean in the 1960s and African populist models of development such as *Ujamaa* in Tanzania, Harambee in Kenya, African humanism in Zambia, and the Common Man's Charter in Uganda) contained explicit development goals. The current neoliberal economic liberalization regime is, on the other hand, according to Haggard (1998), simply a marketing strategy meant to open up the world for predominantly northern-owned multinational corporations (MCs), without

offering a customer-made, specific development model for each country (Canterbury, 2007). This has created a need for post-neoliberal economic liberalization development theory and practice, such as Buddhist economics.

Of great concern to social scientists and human service workers is the fact that neoliberal economic liberalization has a stifling effect on independent critical thought necessary to formulate development theory. Such thought flourished under colonialism, neocolonialism, and nationalism in the South, but is lacking today because the predominant neoliberal ideologues of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) formulate and hand down economic policy. The southern political and economic elite follow this policy to the letter and benefit from it at the expense of the masses that wallow in poverty and provide cheap labor.

However, after thirty years of the success and failure of economic liberalization in both the North and South, new development theory and practice has materialized. The challenge for social scientists and human service workers as development stakeholders is to return to independent critical thought on development. The writers of this monograph step up to the challenge by discussing the emerging “development” theory, philosophy, and practice (best practices) that the “new American century” (see Canterbury, 2007) has triggered both at home and abroad as the US seeks to implement and defend its style of democracy and capitalism globally. Their central concern is that the crusade by northern governments and their multinational corporations to globalize free-market economics has failed to deliver economic equity and good governance in many southern countries and has led to a homegrown underclass in the northern countries (Todaro & Smith, 2009; Peach, 1999). The writers are inspired by the alternative ways of “development,” which are bearing fruit in many parts of the world.

Boardman (2009) of World Vision New Zealand laments that the top-down development agencies – both government and non-government – are quick to enter communities where need is evident, but fail to have a strong understanding of exit strategies. For much of the development community, recognition of the need for sound exit strategies, both from a theoretical and operational perspective, is a relatively recent trend. Boardman discusses approaches related to exit strategies, including issues related to community participation, community governance, organizational business practice, linkages to sustainability, and the role of community-based monitoring and evaluation. He postulates that development agencies should actively consider their exit strategy prior to entering a community and the critical importance of sound project design, especially within restricted budgets and timeframes. He further challenges human services development workers to reassess their development approach and have a greater appreciation of the integrated nature of socio-economic sustainability, incorporating a combined needs- and rights-based approach. The challenges this presents to government policy and NGO marketing, especially in terms of commitment to long-term development, will also be briefly considered or implied in this monograph.

Cahn, Kinivuwai, and Morrow (2005) review the case for microfinance in rural Fijian communities, the issues of institutional sustainability of microfinance in Fiji, and current microfinance providers through a study assessing the feasibility of implementing a World Vision micro-enterprise development program in Fiji. Rural villages in Fiji operate within a cash economy, but many village-based Fijians are excluded from formal facilities for saving and borrowing money. Fijians who do not have access to formal savings and credit are severely constrained in managing financial resources so that they and their families can advance economically.

In the past, a number of initiatives (both government and non-government) have been implemented to provide micro-savings and credit facilities for rural Fijians. While providing benefits for some, these initiatives have often been institutionally unsustainable. Since 1999 the National Microfinance Unit, a government initiative, has provided support to microfinance providers, changing the approach and focus of microfinance in Fiji. Some writers in this monograph describe some ventures in micro-finance social enterprises, but the Fiji study cautions us to constantly evaluate best practice, such as the initiatives championed here. So, like life, best practices should be constantly examined to be worthy living.

In human services we should be conversant with development as a means to social welfare. By looking at the political perspectives and economic and sociological interpretations of such concepts as dependence and independence, and directly discussing development as a means to social welfare, we should understand the need, rationale for and origins of institutions of social welfare, and appreciate the work of NGOs and nonprofit organizations in US and some international communities.

To underpin any clear description of development, it is necessary for us to have an understanding of the way in which ideas about development have grown and changed (i.e. have themselves developed), agree on the main components of development, and have an understanding of closely associated ideas on what development is not. We should study development as a way of understanding relationships between groups of people and between nations, as well as to fulfill hopes for our work and for opportunities for better lives for others. “What is the meaning of growth if it is not translated into the lives of people?” (United Nations Development Program, 1995).

Ideas of development have changed as such understanding has deepened, so there is no final definition. We can only describe development in terms which include essential ingredients and our own basic values. We see development as a continuing process of change for the better among collectives of people (usually nations) and recognize that the process in any one society can have positive or negative effects on development for others.

All development should be about improving human lives, and it is essential to such development that people have the chance to lead long, healthy lives, have access to knowledge and learning, and contribute to and share in increases in prosperity. Prosperity is not simply about aggregated wealth in money terms, but also about fair access to health care, knowledge, and resources for all groups in society: women as well as men, homosexuals as well as the heterosexuals, and the able and disabled, in the “developed” or “developing” countries. Furthermore, prosperity means a serious effort to eradicate poverty. This is the call of human service education and practice, which this monograph sets out to answer with innovative best practices.

### **Trend #1: Socioeconomic Stratification in the US: The Irony of “Development”**

The force of poverty is increasing once more, driven by globalization. Since 1980, a change in the American class system has become so noticeable that social scientists have charted the trend of a sixth socioeconomic class emerging at the lower end (Todaro & Smith, 2009; Peach, 1999; Eitzen & Zinn, 1991; Lapham, 2003; Smeeding & Gottschalk, 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The trend has the following characteristics: (a) the upper class percentage appears to be increasing to 3% by the early 1990's; (b) the affluent upper middle class is declining approximately 0.25% to 0.5% per year; (c) the lower middle class is declining at a similar rate; (d) the working class population seems to be gaining slightly; (e) the working poor class is

increasing by 0.25% to 0.5% a year; and (f) a new class, the permanent underclass, may be emerging (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002; U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 1988). Current estimates of the present permanent underclass (those persons not allowed to enter or become part of either the economic or social life of the mainstream culture) are between 0.5% and 1% with some slight annual increase (Massey, 2007).

A large middle class (two-thirds of the population) has traditionally been the heart of the socioeconomic fabric of industrial America. If this social/economic trend continues, and the current course of information/technology-based changes indicates that it will, traditional American capitalism and political and cultural beliefs are headed for serious change in this century. With a shrinking middle class, a number of whom will move down to a lower SES level, a growing underclass, and a slight increase in the upper class, the increasing discrepancy between the “haves” and the “have-nots” will become a more serious social, political, and human services issue.

It is clear that the existing capitalist system must change in some manner. In spite of the conservative neo-liberalist political climate of the Reagan-Bush years, some scholars and a few leaders in both parties have discussed with some skepticism the realities of globalization, its vector, the information age, and its consequences for the culture (Eitzen & Leedham, 2004; Naisbitt, Naisbitt, & Philips, 2000; Reich, 1970; Toffler 1970).

The upper ruling class in the US has always been able to depend upon a large conservative middle class to maintain the status quo social order and culture, except in times of economic depression or recession. This may not be possible with a smaller middle class and dominant lower classes. Of course, no ruling class has ever given up or shared power and status. The increasing ability of the conservative ruling class to control presidential national elections

and the administrative processes of government seems at times clearly impressive. Yet an ethos of democracy runs deep in America and, as inequality among the classes becomes clearer and more fixed, it is doubtful that those with less than their parents will be inclined to docilely accept their fate, especially as they grow in number. This emerging socioeconomic reality will continue to impact national elections to include the voices of the lower classes, as was witnessed in President Obama's resounding victory.

### **Trend #2: Challenges Facing Children and Families**

Last September, approximately 3.5 million young Americans began their education in public and private schools. What do we know about these children and what the future holds for them if present trends and conditions continue?

- Fifteen percent are children of teenaged parents.
- Fifteen percent are physically or mentally challenged, many due to drug abuse by the parents. Some of them carry HIV.
- Fifteen percent are children who speak a language other than English as their native language.
- Fourteen percent are children of unmarried parents, and another 12% are living in some sort of foster home with neither their fathers nor their mothers.
- Forty-five percent will live in a broken home before they reach the age of 18.
- Ten percent have illiterate or poorly educated parents or guardians.
- More than 25% of them will not finish high school.
- More than 33% will become latch key children with no adult supervision outside of school for long periods of time.

- Nearly 1 in 5 families in the United States is now headed by a woman and two-thirds of these mothers work.
- About half of the children who enroll in the first grade this fall will have lived in a one-parent home by the time they graduate from high school (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995, p. 13; Brux, 2005; Hildebrand, Phenice, & Gray, 2008; Lawson & Anderson, 1999; National Center for Education Statistics, 1988; Quint, 1994, p. 11).

Historically and culturally, schooling and human services delivery in America have relied upon a partnership with a family structure consisting of a mother and a father, one of whom was at home most of the time to provide support, nurturing, and follow through on school work. The family was supposed to provide certain values and motivation for children coming to school/human services agencies (King, Chipman, & Cruz-Jansen, 1994). The school/human services agency was supposed to support the family values and provide education in basic skills, knowledge, and citizenship. In the 1950s and earlier, when only 50% of school age children went to school beyond the 8th grade and many working class and unskilled jobs were available to those who did not attend school beyond the 8th grade, that family model worked well. A majority or large percentage of a school community would have children in school and could be counted upon to support school levies and bond issues. This school-family partnership was at the heart of successful American schooling and funding (Lawson & Anderson, 1999).

Today, that model of schooling fits 20% of families and schools, and they are largely found in affluent suburbs and some small communities and towns. Today, 70% of women with school age children work outside the home and that figure continues to climb (Eitzen & Zinn, 1991). In 2000 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that over 12 million or 30% of American homes with school age children were single-family homes where the parent works (Ketteringham,

2007). In 2009 there were 11.6 million single parents living with their children. Of these, 9.9 million were single mothers and 1.7 million were single fathers (U. S. Census Bureau, 2009, 2010). There is no way to wish away this new trend or to insist upon a more traditional form of families or parenting.

Single-parent families can no longer be viewed as nontraditional families. These families are all around us today. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that about 30% percent of American families are headed by only one parent. As more single-parent families have appeared on the American landscape interest has grown as to the effect of these households on children's wellbeing. (Ketteringham 2007, p. 1)

The challenge to human services must either be to find ways to provide high quality services for all children, regardless of family-origin, thus increasing the incentive for both parents to work and be away from home, or to allow the social status of parents to determine (even more than they now do) the outcomes of services (Swiniarski, Breitborde, & Murphy, 1999). If families can help, that is an added benefit. However, if American schooling/human services continue to allow the social status of the parents to largely determine the outcomes of schooling/human services, then the future of public education/human services is bleak (Wilson, 1987; Lamb, 1998), because the number of families from disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups that face reduced real incomes may continue increasing in the rest of this century. Human services work and education should continue to emphasize the inclusion of all people from diverse backgrounds by highlighting skills which students bring with them as well as those that the educators gleaned from their own backgrounds.

The new jobs created as part of the transformation to an information/technology based culture are largely information processing, sales, and service-oriented jobs (including human

services). The jobs that were eliminated as part of the transition were well paying manufacturing positions, skilled production jobs, and middle and upper management positions. Thus, if a family is to maintain its socioeconomic position, both parents have to work. Twenty-five percent of today's working women are married to men who make less than \$20,000 a year. This trend is increasing (for example, two people making \$18,000 replacing one who made \$36,000). Such a dynamic requires more jobs that are less rewarding in many ways. Additionally, of course, women are being freed from the cultural requirements of staying home. It is becoming more and more accepted in the culture for women as well as men to seek fulfilling careers. Many different roles of parenting are emerging. Generally, there is a growing belief in a notion of "quality time" as parents, as opposed to being able to spend large amounts of time with children. A natural consequence is that parents focus upon parent-child relationships and may be less inclined to include schooling concerns as part of that quality time. Increasingly, schools are being asked to provide the totality of the educational responsibility. Human services such as pre-school and day care, Big Brother Big Sister, as well as extended day activities (e.g. Boys/Girls Clubs) are now considered part of the regular schooling, which has opened up jobs for professional human services workers specializing in this area. Because childhood matters (Evans, & Meyers, 1995), human services must be there to be with the children when they are not at school or not having quality time with their parents. Those seeds have germinated and are growing. In a global perspective, "We have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. We have a duty therefore, to the entire world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs" (United Nations General Assembly, 2000).

## **Possible Delivery Outcomes & Implications for Education/Human Services**

Four possible outcomes emerge from the socioeconomic trends we discussed above. These four are not the only four, or even the most likely four. They are four that can be seen to logically flow from the information presented above, if logic has anything to do with it. Each of the four might exist in different forms or in relationships different from one another. They are neither predictions nor suggested possibilities. They are provided with the hope of encouraging the reader to begin to project possible outcomes. The subscribers to this monograph present some empirical evidence to suggest that the said outcomes have already occurred and are currently calling on all human service workers to formulate solutions, exemplified herein as best practices.

### **Possible Outcome # 1: Participative Structures**

One of the concepts already embraced by corporations (including Megatrends, Future Shock, Second Wave, and Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture) is developing participative structures. By January 1, 1995, many small companies became huge conglomerates through mergers and acquisitions (Mander & Goldsmith, 1996) and others continued to do so in the first part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Team building, collaborative leadership, shared decision making, and problem solving relationships are all viewed as part of effective organizational cultures in an information/technology society (Grant, 2002). There is some evidence (Kilman, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985) that many corporate organizations, particularly those that are directly involved in changing and advancing technology, develop these types of organizational cultures. If such a trend continues and expands, the impact of such organizational cultures could be dramatic. Partnerships, collaborations that include shared status and power relationships, could become dominant cultural norms in other types of organizations within American culture.

Institutions such as government bureaucracies, old-line organizations, and human service/cultural agencies, including schools and universities, have begun to develop these cultural norms as well. If public policy also becomes participative, especially at the grassroots level, in contrast to the current adversarial structures, then the potential for developing a cohesive, multicultural society would be present. This might allow the United States to develop, both nationally and internationally, the types of structures and relationships necessary for maintaining the United States as a just society. In such an event, schools, schooling, universities, and colleges would take on a very different flavor.

Elementary/secondary schools and universities have to begin to prepare their clientele for such cultures. There should be much more sharing and interaction between them. Partnerships and collaborative relationships have become natural outcomes. School settings have become adult and professional learning sites for both university and school staffs. A variety of organizations in addition to the normal academic and extra curricular programs are involved in schools. Human service agencies providing daycare, extended care, early education, adult and continuing education, and independent pursuit of knowledge have all found their way into schools and aim for comprehensive and continuing education and opportunities for university-community partnerships through service-learning and social enterprises. Schools, universities, and community human service agencies have more than likely become extended families to children and adults as well.

Such structures require national and international policy making and collaborative relationships between the public sector and corporate cultures. Shared power with long-term planning and direction is the crucial ingredient. While the seeds of such a future culture exist within current social arrangements, this outcome may be the most unlikely of the four.

Individualism, suspicion of government, racial and ethnic animosity, sexism, ageism, heterosexism (Mehr, 1998; Petrie, 1996), avarice for great personal wealth, conservative religious beliefs (especially the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant [WASP] ethic), and Social Darwinist competition (Eriksen, 1981) are strongly held values within the American psyche and work against collaboration, cooperation, and participative relationships.

Historically, Americans have tended to support these very conservative values, and continue to do so, whether privatization works or not (Ehrenberg, 2006). Fortunately, the human services movement aims at fostering cooperation rather than competition. Maybe human services workers can influence the rest of America to realize that education and human services are still social goods that yield benefits to the nation as a whole. Perhaps human service providers should think of providing education to needy children in nonprofit organizations that depend on the United Way, Community Foundation, and other charitable funds.

### **Global participative structures.**

Human service professionals have emphasized the need for international perspectives and initiatives. Lee (1998), writing in the context of professional counseling, points out the need for collaborative international action and recognizes the efforts by various professions at adopting a global perspective in order to more effectively address challenges that increasingly transcend political borders. This effort has led to the development of an international helping paradigm that uniquely “encompasses a universal consensus for social action to promote human development” (Lee, 1998, p. 293).

In *Human Services in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Alfred Kisubi (2001) expands our traditional notion of client group to embrace a more global look at the world and the needs of its

inhabitants. He implores us to consider those populations that are immigrating, fleeing from political oppression, famine, or failing economies.

According to Kisubi, even in developing countries there is an expanding population whose daily needs remain unmet, especially in vulnerable populations defined by race, gender, and age. Human service professionals are encouraged to participate more widely in many global efforts to address these issues (McClam & Woodside, 2000, p. 315).

Lizbeth Ann Gray (2005) echoes the widespread call for international perspectives in human services education. She believes that many of our human services students receive “only small pieces of education about international social issues and ways to learn more about alternative methods of human service provision” (p. 2). She argues, “A world view of human services is paramount to understanding how working with people is culturally contextual” (p.2). She, like Eitzen and Leedham (2004), believes that, in our interdependent world, contemporary students must be prepared to live in a global environment and “develop skills and competences appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p. 2).

Heeding this imperative, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Education and Human Services has fledgling but growing links with international universities. In addition, the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership (HEL) has an ongoing exchange program and many connections with visiting faculty from abroad. So, when the program launched its new curriculum, it included an entire course on globalization and human services. This initiative will ultimately develop a long-term link with overseas organizations, especially African universities, where over fifty students from various disciplines have attended the annual interdisciplinary seminar on globalization, earning internship credit.

The emergence of and development of civil society organizations in Africa has created both constraints and opportunities. A university in Africa is well-placed to serve the interests of the NGO community by providing institutional support, organizational strengthening, and management development. In turn, the community works as a theater for student service-learning internships. The Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership at the UW Oshkosh is well-placed to support such an African university and to benefit from the opportunity to send human services students for participatory service-learning internships that the African university supports. As the Honorable J. William Fulbright put it, "If large numbers of people can learn to know and understand people from nations other than their own, they might develop a capacity for empathy, a distaste for killing other men, and an inclination for peace" (Hopkins, 1992, p. 1)." We wish to echo these words as the mantra of the exchange program that might as well be our best practices.

### **Possible Outcome #2: The Corporate Nation**

Imagine the following scenario. This nation's socioeconomic and political life is dominated by a few selective, large, and global corporations, some of which are owned by Americans. These corporations have developed a "corporate culture" that provides for continuation and survival of the corporation. Their wealth, power, and size exceed that of many nations (Blake, 2006). They provide for such things as daycare, pre-school, and schooling from the earliest grades through all higher levels. A variety of arrangements exist as to who receives what type of education and human services, but people essentially serve a corporation from birth until retirement or death. The corporation has become the extended family of its employees. Corporations run schools for the rich who in turn abhor public education as below standards and only needed for people who are not part of a corporate family including the population of the

emerging third world inner cities. Research is formed around the corporations' particular focus and/or needs. Some form of public education or schooling also is provided through whatever government exists, which means that such education and human services are more than likely to be primarily related to military, police, and security forces.

### **Impact on higher education**

Research and scholarly institutions that train human services workers either serve as contractual agents for corporations, or, more likely, are established and maintained by the corporations for their own purposes. Corporations pay certain professional schools to develop some of their needed professionals (\$250,000 to train a doctor). Clearly, corporations would own schools up through at least what we now would call bachelor's degrees. Schools of education and human services likewise are part of the corporate culture. Schooling and human services obviously make extensive use of technology and are as labor intensive and free as possible, with much of education being completed as a part of corporate culture. Earn while you learn if possible (Longanecker, 2006; Lyall & Sell, 2006). As a result of this corporate invasion, technology is invading every area of our personal and professional lives (DiPietro & Nelson, 2000; Kincaid, 2004).

Although this may have sounded like science fiction 40 years ago, the seedlings of such an outcome exist in the current culture and continue to bloom as we proceed with this century. Indeed, the fastest growing divisions of large corporate organizations today are their education departments and programs. Large human services organizations like the Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, and the Salvation Army have elaborate training programs. Very large corporations offer daycare and other human services as part of the corporate culture in order to attract and

retain the employees they want. If the development of large corporations is necessary to compete with other nations and groups of nations, then this outcome is indeed a possibility.

### **Possible Outcome #3: The Technological Culture**

Another seed in American culture is a drive for independence and more control of one's own work. In step with this individualism an ever increasing number of persons, particularly in the consulting-service segment of society, work in their own homes. The need for businesses to have large office complexes and working areas is being eroded by technology. Providing members of a company with technology to use in their own homes is very economical. It is estimated that 40% of the work force already works full- or part-time in their homes. This trend could logically and practically continue, especially among human services providers of daycare, respite, and other family services (Kincaid, 2004). The U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (1988) estimated that by the year 2000, or shortly thereafter, approximately 60% of those persons working in the workforce would work full- or part-time from their homes. This trend continues especially at this time of recession, when budget cuts have forced difficult choices (Leavengood, 2001).

Across the United States, online education is exploding: 4.6 million students took a college-level online course during fall 2008, up 17 percent from a year earlier, according to the Sloan Survey of Online Learning. Colleges and Universities that have plunged into the online field cite their dual missions to serve as many students as possible while remaining affordable as well as a desire to exploit the latest technologies. (Gabriel, 2010, p. A3)

With technology, businesses and corporations, including human services organizations, can hold meetings, when necessary, in a variety of places designed for temporary use. This of

course may allow for more dispersing of population, a trend we are already experiencing. Large cities are no longer needed as places to collect workers. Large cities, or at least cities, have become home for those who work in them (Kincaid, 2004), people who are usually lower or working class employees (the emerging inner city third worlds). Reich (1970) and Toffler (1970) both described such a future, and so far their projections appear to be accurate. Kilman, Saxton, & Serpa (1985) predict a slightly different future. They suggest that human need for social contact and interaction would limit such trends. Human service professionals can develop programs in that regard using technology. The contributors to this monograph illustrate the use of technology by discussing examples of how online teaching and learning are being integrated with service-learning in a college- or university–community partnership.

Other cultural/social activities carried out by today's schools, including sports, debate, drama, and a variety of other extra-curricular activities, are increasingly being done in other ways, by other human services organizations (such as YMCA, Recreation Parks, Boys and Girls Clubs), and are no longer part of school or university life. The effects this could have on families are dramatic. Consider only one possible effect: rather than having to be concerned about daycare and extended family care, the big concern may become "cabin fever." Would children and students who are at home all day be doing their school work or university work when it was convenient for them and their families? The change in the type of person needed for university life might not be recognizable to many of us.

#### **Possible Outcome #4: The Entrepreneur Culture**

Because of advancing technology and an increasingly diverse social and cultural lifestyle, an entrepreneurial culture has appeared. Such a culture is built upon the belief that each person has the right to design and create his or her own sub-culture. This includes living in a variety of

lifestyle and family configurations, including gay-lesbian and single-member family sub-cultures. This could put children in multiple family sub-cultures. A parent may choose, for example, to provide for but not live with any children resulting from a particular relationship. Doing, becoming, and creating “one’s own thing” has become the height of entrepreneurship.

School/ human services organizations are run in the same way. Schools and universities specialize in certain entrepreneurial approaches to schooling for teacher training and professional life. Universities very much have their own entrepreneurial school and are commissioned to develop and promote new ones on demand. In fact, professors have, as their major function, the designing and developing of these new entrepreneurial schools and other human services organizations. The name for university workers might in the near future also change. Professing would have little to do with it.

Such an entrepreneurial system has the socioeconomic advantage (to some) of being able to maintain an existing and stable socioeconomic class system within the existing American culture. It is adaptable to whatever effect technological changes might require. Certainly the seeds for this type of schooling and human services have strong currency among advocates of free market capitalism and Social Darwinism in the contemporary American culture (supply-side economics, laissez-faire, free enterprise, trickle down economics, etc.). Such a system, by mistake, also provides sub-quality school/human services to the emerging third-world-inner-city populations, whose schools are “bleak fortresses with rotting classrooms and a few amenities to motivate the young” (Kozol, 1991; Mitchell, Fowler, & Towle, 1991, p. 60).

Entrepreneurs design and offer schooling/human services to match different lifestyles and sub-cultures (Swiniarski, Breitborde, & Murphy, 1999). Affordability of a particular type and quality of schooling/human service is a significant factor. There might be a certain amount of

money available for each child as a basic education amount. Tax refunds, direct payments, or some other form of developing resources could be used to provide a basic minimum amount for each child. A variety of entrepreneurs, some of them faith-based, have created “schools” and other “consumer human service agencies” to vie for this money. Others, for additional money, have created more advanced schools, universities, or “specialized sub-culture” school/human services agencies for those consumers who can afford them. Already we have many private human services organizations in corrections, sheltered workshops, and job-coaching agencies.

Given the constant change of a capitalist system due to economic downturns, such as the current one, capitalist human services organizations/schools provide quality services only to those consumers who have the ability to pay for their services (Hasenfeld, 1983). The poor who suffer from ecological discrimination in ghettos, barrios and developing nation slums, are relegated to receive poor services in “minimum” public organizations.

Because colleges and universities are part of the capitalist entrepreneurial system, human service educators ought to shift the paradigm by training human service professionals to advocate for social entrepreneurial and harm reduction programs. Because entrepreneurship can sometimes get out of hand, creating a somewhat unintended social outcome, human services will continue to pick up the victims of the functions and dysfunctions of capitalist entrepreneurship. Human services workers, administrators, and educators must continue to strengthen and enhance family life, which is now challenged by technology, complex family configurations, and long working hours (Eriksen, 1981). Fortunately, more jobs will open in the service sector. To ascend and surmount the mountain of “harm-reducing” that looms ahead, human services must work tenfold to change the current capitalist entrepreneurial culture to a new paradigm of social enterprise through “decentralism.”

## What is Decentralism?

Transcending traditional categories of right (conservative) and left (liberal), decentralism has been the logical meeting place for those in many fields of endeavor, including human services, who believe that preserving the human scale (the set of physical quantities, and quantities of information, characterizing the human body, its motor, sensory, or mental capabilities and human social institutions) and encouraging a spirit of community are essential for the human spirit to thrive. In a world afflicted with gigantism in its social, economic, and political institutions, decentralism is often mistakenly identified as radical, but it is in fact based on many traditional values (Sale, 1996).

Decentralists are a diverse group, but they share a common belief in restoring community self-reliance and bringing economic and social activities back to a more human scale. Sale (1996) in his book, *Human Scale*, wrote that big government, big business, big everything – now the crises that imperil modern America - are the inevitable results of gigantism grown out of control and we must do something about them. Over the centuries, human scale has had many eloquent advocates, ranging from Lao Tzu and Gandhi (in Asia), to Aristotle, to Kropotkin, Jefferson, and Chesterton (in the West), Paulo Freire (Latin America), and Julius Nyerere (Africa). Fritz Schumacher (1999) introduced the concept of human scale to mainstream industrial society in the book *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. In it he called for an economy of permanence based on human values and sustainable uses of natural resources, and this marked a cultural shift in our thinking about economics.

Schumacher's ideas rekindled a modern interest in the human scale, decentralist approach, one which has been intensified by today's social, economic, and environmental crises. The modern environmental movement has awakened an interest in the decentralized approach as

issues of energy use, resource consumption, and bioregional preservation gain urgency (Sale, 1996).

Intensified globalization has brought forth the need for cultural and community preservation and appropriate technologies. Many visionaries and activists in a variety of fields have opted to develop small-scale, community-based solutions to these problems. Together with the writings of Leopold Kohr, farmer Wendell Berry, economist Ralph Borsodi, regional planner Jane Jacobs, bioregionist Kirkpatrick Sale, statesman and philosopher Julius Nyerere, and many others, they continue to build a modern decentralist legacy.

The Schumacher Society is dedicated to gathering this rich decentralist tradition, continuing to bring the values of scale and sustainability into our modern discourse, and demonstrating that small is not only beautiful – it is a viable alternative.

In the introduction to *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, Theodore Roszak (2009) states, “E.F. Schumacher’s economics is not part of the dominant style. On the contrary, his deliberate intention is to subvert ‘economic science’ by calling its every assumption into question, right down to its psychological and metaphysical foundations” (p. 2). Roszak goes on to say that it is

A libertarian political economy that distinguishes itself from orthodox socialism and capitalism by insisting that the scale of organization must be treated as an independent and primary problem. The tradition, while closely affiliated with socialistic values, nonetheless prefers mixed to ‘pure’ economics systems (as cited in Schumacher, 2009, p.1).

These systems are neither purely capitalist, nor purely socialist or communist. The Nordic nations have such a system (the social democratic system), where both welfare programs and private enterprise are encouraged. Roszak states that such a system is

Therefore hospitable to many forms of free enterprise and private ownership, provided always that the size of private enterprise is not so large as to divorce ownership from personal involvement, which is, of course, now the rule in most of the world's administered capitalisms. (As cited in Schumacher, 2009, p. 1)

### **Inference**

This leads to my inference. As we look toward the mid-21st century, we see the following:

- Poverty in America, both in the rural and the urban areas, is growing, and more children are neglected. Human services professionals are working hard, mainly as caregivers and custodians, to ameliorate the problem.
- Human services educators, practitioners, and students continue to need sensitivity training to cultures other than their own.
- Human services workers are increasingly working in schools, and human services agencies are forming partnerships with schools.
- Service-learning and the practicum are the mainstay of training.
- Programs are beginning to change, and human services workers are being prepared to offer more services in response to the changing work and family patterns.
- In an increasingly interdependent world, human services educators must learn to empower their students to discover patterns and to understand that the U.S. agenda is not only national but also global.

- A more diverse student body and diverse consumers, educators, and providers are adapting their curricula/programs/tastes according to this diversity.
- There is a dangerous separation of consumer categories and generations. Young people are living increasingly lonely lives isolated from the elderly.

There is a dire need for human services programs and institutions to serve the different categories of consumers and generations, to promote apprenticeship opportunities, and to bring diverse populations together. In this regard, human services workers are the professionals called to the task of human development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, 1999).

Development, however, is an ever-moving target. It can never be finally achieved, and the process should never be arrested. It will best be moved forward if all citizens contribute actively to decisions about it and if there is a constant opportunity for individuals and groups to participate in all aspects of it. For those of us in rich countries, this view of development has several consequences:

- We have a responsibility to see that our governments' actions in the interest of our own countries' development do not have a negative impact on the development of poorer countries.
- We support and encourage official and non-official (non-governmental) activities which will have a positive impact on development both in our own countries and elsewhere.
- We carefully monitor development processes in our own societies to ensure that opportunities for health, knowledge, and prosperity are equally open to all, so

that poverty is reduced for all, women and men, minority communities as well as majority ones.

In order for all this to happen, members of our society have to be aware of the issues. This makes development education essential, and human services workers are well positioned in thought and action to be the educators. What human services can do to encourage a just international system is the major thrust of *Best Practices in Human Services*. Contributors postulate that in their respective institutions and communities, human services workers should (a) encourage moral values at the individual level, discourage exploitation of others, and promote mutual respect; (b) support conscientization of the masses; (c) promote mass mobilization for boycotts; (d) advocate for the use of land for food and crops rather than cash crops; (e) endorse value added export; (f) facilitate South-South/regional market promotion; and (g) link each of our local markets with fair trade organizations. The following is a synopsis of the best practices that the monograph subscribers have prescribed as remedies to the crises that imperil the world as the inevitable consequences of gigantism grown out of control (Sale, 1996).

### **What to Do about Gigantism: Best Practices**

The monograph is divided into five parts. Part 1 addresses community building and student learning through campus-community partnerships and citizenship programs. In chapter 2, “BRIDGE: Bridging Resources in DC to Guide and Educate,” Goldstein, Kaplan, and Nashman discuss the current disconnect between public/social service provision and the means to access these services as a growing phenomenon for the most vulnerable citizens in our nation’s capital. The authors hope that the BRIDGE project addresses this challenge. BRIDGE provides pertinent information to members of the Washington, DC community, as well as to the agencies who strive to serve them. This project exemplifies the best practices in service-learning curricula,

providing students valuable professional development skills and experience working with urban community development and public sector visibility. This project builds upon the foundation provided by existing community resource guides, and collects accurate, up-to-date information via multiple cross-checks and phone calls made by students to service providers. In doing so, the project effectively mobilizes students toward community outreach and provides a mutually beneficial communication tool linking DC-area nonprofits to their client base. Further, this project bolsters the nonprofit/public sector's efforts to improve the lives of DC citizens, fostering an effective public-private partnership between a university institution and the community at large.

In chapter 3, “Youth Social Enterprise: A University-Community Partnership Planting Seeds of Change in Alaska,” Sobocinski discusses the challenges to human service organizations. He highlights financial sustainability as an obstacle to the hiring and retention of a competent workforce, particularly for organizations serving transitional age youth. To reduce the harm, he suggests that innovative and flexible approaches to achieving programmatic and financial sustainability are required to respond to the unique challenges of this age group. He points out the enormous potential of the Alaska Seeds of Change (ASC), a university-community partnership between the Anchorage Urban League and the University of Alaska Anchorage, to bring about personal and community change, because it is such a mission-driven social enterprise representing one promising approach to engaging youth. He believes ASC will help youth acquire independent living skills through meaningful employment in a competitive urban greenhouse business. ASC will maintain a commitment to personal growth and change, community renovation, environmental stewardship, and program quality improvement through process and outcomes assessment, the training of university students, and financial viability. The

best practice here is the offering of academic preparation in the principles and practices of positive development for at-risk youth and the coordinating of practicum and service-learning experiences at ASC for human service students. ASC youth, as primary shareholders, will assume leadership roles in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the program.

Sokocinski believes that meeting the unique challenges of transitional age youth requires creative collaborations that span traditional service delivery systems. ASC, with its commitment to personal change, education, and training of university students, and to economic sustainability, provides a promising approach to providing services and supports to a largely invisible population of youth.

In chapter 4, “Teaching Empowerment and Collaboration to Human Services Graduate Students by Utilizing Service-Learning,” Sommers uses service-learning to develop collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership in online human services graduate students. She notes the exponential growth of online learning over the past decade. She argues that it is critical to the education of budding human services professionals to have meaningful opportunities to integrate theory with practice. She recommends service-learning as pedagogy for thoughtfully organizing learning opportunities which meet actual community needs, for providing a medium for students to talk, think, or write about their experience, and for developing collaboration and empowerment skills. She argues that service-learning, as one of the best practices, is one method for acquiring meaningful experience. She argues that service-learning moves away from a “missionary ideology” of working “for” the community toward the position of working “with” the community and embodying the tenets of mutuality and equality – all vital to developing collaborative and empowerment skills. By getting involved in social,

cultural, environmental, and other aspects of the human services community, students acquire greater depth and breadth of experience.

In chapter 5, “Targeting Educators in the Helping Professions: Best Practices in Online Pedagogy and Programming in Human Services Education,” Renold gives another case study of an integrated traditional program and an ever-expanding online service-learning curriculum. He provides a detailed summary and analysis of the best practices for the online delivery of high quality human services courses in higher education, including syllabus and content creation, course delivery, virtual discussions and office hours, narrated lectures, and creating course assets, as well as program marketing, obstacles and impediments. He believes the Human Services Department at the California State University Fullerton is a pioneer, innovator, and significant force in human services education because several members of the department have been teaching online essentially since the inception of the Internet and have provided leadership in pedagogy, technological know-how, and curriculum development and delivery for nearly four decades. He credits the efforts of Bill Lions, Gerald Corey, Michael Russell, Patrick Callanan, Mikel Hogan, Kristi Kanel, and countless others for producing scores of social workers, psychologists, therapists, community advocates, and leaders, and for contributing numerous research articles and monographs, many of which are considered classics, in the field used worldwide to educate, inform, and train future generations of human service professionals.

In chapter 6 of part I, “Beyond Public School: Postsecondary Options for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities,” Handley admits that the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which mandates that students with disabilities be included in regular education, fails to meet the needs of young adults. Many students with developmental disabilities have been mainstreamed or somehow included in public education. Each has an Individualized Education

Plan, which designates the level of involvement with regular education and typical peers. In some areas of the country, students with disabilities have been very included and have been considered members of the class. However, once a student graduates from public school at age 18 or 21, the mandate to be included changes. Many students with developmental disabilities, including cognitive disabilities, transition to day habilitation programs, sheltered workshops, supported employment agencies, or other environments less inclusive than public school.

Handley argues that providing the most appropriate programs for young adults with developmental disabilities and engaging in best practices is a goal for human services educators as well as human services professionals. Postsecondary options for this population provide opportunities for inclusion and integration in the most typical settings, such as a college campus. Understanding the concepts, the research, the funding streams, and the outcomes of postsecondary options is a critical piece of improving the human condition. She reviews a variety of programs and discusses the specific research results of one program. Readers will have a clear understanding of possible program models and the research which supports the provision of these programs.

Part II of the monograph discusses harm reduction through professional and self-advocacy for those who are disadvantaged because of a master status: race, age, socioeconomic status, gender, immigration status, country of origin, or any other ascribed status. There are five chapters in this section of the monograph. In Chapter 7, "Harm Reduction and Human Services," Shepard considers the ways HIV prevention policy was mired in a decades-old conflict between criminalization and prevention of social problems, between advocates of social control and those in favor of policies that support self-determination and personal freedom. Invoking the Human Services Code of Ethics, which calls for "Human service professional to respect the integrity and

welfare of the client at all times”, and for “Human service professionals to act as advocates in addressing unmet client and community needs,” Shepard argues that these calls for dignity for all clients and for advocacy for unmet client and community needs are fundamentally consistent with the harm reduction approach to practice. Narrating the history of the harm reduction movement in New York, he cites the work that the Young Lords and the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power borrowed from the work of international harm reduction groups to influence U.S. AIDS policy and practice.

In chapter 8, “The Women’s Bean Project: From a Hill of Beans to a Productive Life,” Tull argues that unemployment and underemployment keep women in a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break, particularly in times of national economic recession. Government aid programs like TANF and food stamps do little to support changes in lifestyle, self-perception, and ability to function in an employable manner. Unlike a number of human services programs designed to empower women, WBP has the capacity to provide intensive contact, coaching, support, and accountability structures by hiring women to work in the social business aspect of the agency. Tull believes that the WBP is an exemplary human services program and a model of the successful use of social entrepreneurship to end chronic poverty for women and their families. The model of human services offered by the WBP presents a sustainable strategy worthy of inclusion in an inventory of contemporary solutions to human suffering. Tull explores WBP as an example of best practices in human services delivery, looking at both (a) short- and long-term client benefits, including moving women from poverty and low self-esteem to confidence and work readiness, allowing them to lead productive lives; and (b) agency stability and self-sufficiency.

In chapter 9, “Education on the Immigrant Trail: Borderlands of Human Service,” Hones discusses how he (an ESL educator) and Kisubi (a human services educator) started to take their respective students to the No More Deaths migrant respite camp in the Sonoran desert in Arizona. There, students studied economic and political forces that cause hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Central Americans to leave their homes and attempt the dangerous crossing of the Sonora Desert in order to find work and a better life for their children in the United States. Hones observes that, as future teachers and human service providers, students in the course return to their own communities with a better knowledge of the traumatic trails many immigrants must tread, a deeper appreciation for the resilience of immigrants, and a commitment to improving conditions for children and adults on both ends of the immigrant trail. He argues that through reading, reflection, discussion, research, and interviews with various stakeholders on the immigration question—border patrol agents, U.S. and Mexican government officials, researchers, teachers, humanitarian volunteers, *polleros*, *coyotes*, and immigrants themselves—students in the course consider a variety of perspectives on immigration’s impact, both at the border and thousands of miles away, in our nation’s schools and communities. In addition, students provide humanitarian relief to border crossers through water drops, first aid, and documentation of abuse.

In chapter 10, “Workforce and Independent Living Skills Training Model for Individuals with High Functioning Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome Diagnosis,” Shafaie, Crew and Beussink describe the “Tailor Institute model,” a program that focuses on defining the specific skills and talents of gifted individuals with HFA/ AS, identifying employers who require these skills, and offering training to both the individuals and their employers in order to facilitate successful placements. These services are free for the adolescents and young adults with

HFA/AS and their families. The program starts with an interview. Once accepted, each individual is afforded an evaluation to identify skills and areas of giftedness. Upon successful completion of this initial phase, an individualized program is designed for each person. Following appropriate training sessions, the Tailor Institute establishes a complimentary match between a participant and an employer. The Tailor Institute team provides support for participants until they function independently, thereby facilitating successful long-term employment. Findings and reports from other studies indicate that successful vocational models typically offer a range of intensive services to individuals seeking job placement. The most intensive programs and the “tailored” services at the Tailor Institute include some or all of the following services: identification, recruitment, and assessment of individuals with HFA/AS; enhancement of social-communication skills; independent living skills training; workforce skills development training; and employer training.

Studies about successful individuals with autism show that these individuals can make remarkable contributions to society if they receive effective services in a timely manner. The authors believe that this innovative program has extraordinary promise for improving the lives of individuals with autism in the state of Missouri and beyond, and reveal that the material in their article provides a blueprint for any organizations or individuals interested in implementing the Tailor Institute’s model.

In chapter 11, “Teaching Self-Advocacy as a Means to Empowerment and Self-Efficacy,” Stephens and Templeton focus on (a) an exploration of the power of self-advocacy; (b) the relationship between self-advocacy, empowerment, and self-efficacy; and (c) strategies for teaching self-advocacy. The authors provide specific guidelines for how human services professionals can promote self-advocacy and empowerment for their clients. Stephens and

Templeton argue that teaching self-advocacy is a means to empowerment and self-efficacy and that self-advocacy is arguably the highest and most powerful form of advocacy that can be means to personal empowerment and improved self-efficacy. They believe it ultimately has the potential for elevating personal and overall societal quality of life like it did during the civil rights and disability rights movements in the US. The chapter draws upon the latest research and some of the “lessons learned” from existing examples of the deployment of self-advocacy among minority and disempowered groups and explores some of the best practices associated with teaching self-advocacy and promoting empowerment.

Part III applies the arts and humanities to human services. There are two chapters in this section of the monograph. In chapter 12, “Metaphorical Communication: A Universal Tool for Enhancing Communication and Facilitating Change,” Stephens and Wesley focus on (a) an exploration of the dynamics and power of metaphors for facilitating communication and helping clients change, (b) suggestions and examples of how metaphors can be meaningfully fashioned to fit the personal needs of individual clients, and (c) examples of the effective use of both frozen and original metaphors. Specific guidelines are provided for the development of individualized, culturally sensitive, and appropriate metaphors designed to facilitate change. They explore some of the best practices among human services professionals in the various uses, forms, and strategic implementation of metaphors.

In chapter 13, “Approaching Children’s Fears through Bibliotherapy: A Classroom-based Intervention,” Paparoussi, Andreou, and Gkouni report the findings of a study in which they examined the efficacy of bibliotherapy in the treatment of prevalent fears (death and darkness fear) among third grade primary school children. Developmental bibliotherapy was incorporated into the literature lesson by selecting from the students’ textbook passages describing characters

facing relevant fears. Their method was based on Rosenblatt's transactional theory and the three well-known stages of bibliotherapeutic process: identification, catharsis, and insight. Results are discussed in terms of their application to classroom settings and, although the results cannot be widely generalized, the authors suggest an interesting line of research for future investigation.

Part IV gives us the international perspective through examples of best practices in countries other than the US, written by native researchers. In chapter 14, "Empowering Girls and Women: Local Solutions to Global Issues," Trask and Unger discuss the complexities of defining global cultural trends that link individuals and families to home societies in little understood ways. They argue that it is important to address social problems in home society contexts and link recent demographic trends with societal issues and solutions. They believe that this is an understudied and little understood area of scholarship and practice in the family field. To rectify the situation, they encourage readers to recognize gender and economic disparities and to incorporate cultural competence into research and services to individuals and their families. They argue that this is both a critical component of scholarship and practice and an important discussion and research point, especially for scholars concerned with lifespan and family issues. They illustrate their theses by giving a pertinent case example from India, where collective empowerment and advocacy are understood as key to challenging obstacles to female education and oppressive gendered work conditions. Launched in 1988-89, and now covering 9,000 villages and 60 districts in 10 states, this initiative, called *Mahila Samakhya*, is a rural women's empowerment program. What makes it unique is that it is not conceived as a service delivery program. Instead, this program seeks to increase the capacity of girls and women by raising their awareness and confidence, giving them information about their rights and entitlements through development, and training them in the skills to access these rights. The underlying foundation is

that incorporating the voices of girls and women into the actual development of the program will aid them in bettering their status and lives. Participating women have ascribed the success of the program to the fact that it has let them “come out of their houses” (Gupta & Sharma, 2006, p. 283). Women have been able to develop new skills such as talking in public, leading training workshops, understanding bureaucracies, and interacting with all levels of governmental employees. These new roles have allowed girls and women to re-conceptualize themselves as being productive on multiple levels beyond those of wife, mother, and caretaker. Today, these women are able to mobilize women’s collectives, and they recognize that through their involvement they may be able to thwart government corruption and assist in making other developmental programs work. They have also understood that it is through their work that other rural women will become aware of their rights to food supplements, housing subsidies, and employment opportunities.

In chapter 15, “Sustainable Development: Entrepreneurship Education for School Dropouts: A Ugandan Perspective,” Kobusingye is inspired by and replicates the Commission of the European Communities 2006 study, which found positive attitudes toward training, future plans, and small-scale enterprises (SSEs) among entrepreneurship education trainees and graduates. The students and graduates described the training methodology as “practical”. The researchers suggested that there is need for collaboration among all stakeholders to counteract and strategically minimize the problems affecting school dropouts and to promote any initiative geared toward empowering them to become job creators. They believed that it is the responsibility of every person to assist school dropouts to become responsible entrepreneurs and productive members of society. In the same vein, Kobusingye’s study investigates how entrepreneurship education can empower school dropouts to become job creators or assist them

in coping with life. She also examines the contribution of the formal and informal systems of education to job creation initiatives among the school dropouts. The data was collected from the Kampala District of the capital city of Uganda, from 4 government officials, 98 small-scale entrepreneurs (SSEs) engaged in carpentry, 50 customers, and 14 school dropouts. The respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method. Data was collected through a pre-tested questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and a focus group. Qualitative analysis was used to highlight and describe research findings. The results of the study show that, in addition to unemployment, school dropouts face problems such as low self-esteem and negative attitudes, and that entrepreneurship education is a possible alternative to unemployment because it empowers school dropouts to become job creators, rather than job seekers. The study also revealed that recent graduates who established their own workshops, such as small scale carpentry enterprises, are legitimate entrepreneurs who can effectively and efficiently impart entrepreneurial skills to other school dropouts. The author believes that trainees who established their own workshops after attaining entrepreneurship education could become trainers in their own premises.

In chapter 16, “Improving Inner-City Public Schools and Communities through Education Organizing,” Mutén argues that urban communities across the country are gradually beginning to intervene in public school reform. Community organizations are helping residents identify school concerns, plan new educational policies, explore reorganization tactics, and work together to improve schools. The community organizers’ main goals are to increase inner-city school student success, foster a rapport between schools and communities, and increase public participation in the control of education. The author believes that in order to be successful, education organizing has to involve members of the community, parents, youth, and educators in

leadership growth. Education organizing is still a somewhat under-studied and unverified trend, but the work that organizing groups are doing in urban communities is gaining support among education reform advocates, policymakers, and funders as a vital approach for building the public participation necessary to maintain change.

The author cites the work of the Sacramento Area Congregations Together (ACT). This congregation-based organization (which operates through churches, synagogues, and mosques) is part of a larger organizing network named the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO) in California. Throughout the 1990s, the Sacramento Unified School District was one of the lowest performing districts in the state. One out of 10 students read at grade level, and one elementary school in the district, Susan B. Anthony, had 140 suspensions in one year. Mutén believes ACT will affect change in the community. However, this change should first occur at the community level, and maybe eventually at school or district level. Mutén argues that individuals and groups in the community must not only take on leadership roles and be familiar with the school system and its methods, but must also increase their visibility by making themselves known to people outside of the community. She vehemently believes that these positive effects may eventually lead to long-term change because when more citizens become involved, deeper relationships with people in the school system are formed and education organizers continue to address crucial development issues.

Part V of the monograph deals with professional empathy sparked by humanism and guided by professional etiquette and ethics. All subscribers believe that every voice involved in human services should be heard. Educators, practitioners, students, and recipients of services of every status and in every land must be heard, because all of them are essential stakeholders that make human services work possible. In chapter 17, “Relational Needs in the Classroom,”

McElfresh echoes the profound wisdom of the great educators of old, such as Jack Jacques Rousseau on the freedom of Emile, John Dewey on the child's freedom to experiment, and Paulo Freire on praxis. Karl Jaspers tells us to have a life, together with our science. McElfresh postulates that it is not enough to intellectualize, especially in teaching and human services. Research to update our knowledge and technologies should go hand in hand with our individual search for the meaning of life. It is when we have blended our knowledge, technology, and the meaning of life that we can either teach the young to help others or do it ourselves. Change is the essence of helping. To change people through helping is to empower them to grow. According to McElfresh, in the helping interaction the helper (teacher) and the helped (student) should mutually treat each other as unique individuals who have idiosyncratic "relational needs" and values.

Care for the whole person, reflected in all articles, is expressed clearly in the following passage:

The whole person should be served by human services. People should not be known by their labels. No one is only a toothache, a neurosis, or a learning disability. The provision of human services needs to be undertaken in an atmosphere of respect and understanding of every individual's uniqueness, with full recognition that people are dynamic, constantly changing in an ongoing process of "becoming." (Eriksen, 1981, p. 9)

The submissions have one thing in common: they confirm that human services workers are "people-helping professionals." They serve individuals and groups of all ages in a variety of settings, including community mental health centers, geriatric facilities, agencies serving the physically and/or mentally disabled, daycare centers, rehabilitation centers, drug and alcohol programs, services for youth, detention centers, community living arrangements, hospitals, and

other social welfare and educationally related agencies. Human services workers care about others and dedicate themselves to bettering the lives of the people with whom they work directly and of the community at large.

In chapter 18, “*Muntu as Muntu (Human as Human): The Best Practice of Humanism in Human Services: Inferences from the Monograph*,” Kisubi makes inferences and conclusions from the articles in Parts I – IV regarding the philosophical essence of human services education and practice. He postulates that all the best practices described in the monograph are guided by a covert and sometimes overt secular or transcendent humanism, which motivates educators and practitioners to uphold and abide by the noble principle of human services. This secular or transcendent humanism stipulates that every individual in society is entitled to services, which will prevent individual pain, maintain integrity, and enable the individual to deal with realities, stimulate personal growth, and promote a satisfying life for the individual and his or her family. The fleeting nature of the individual, which calls for changing strategies and a multifarious human service epistemology, are expressed clearly in the following passage:

The whole person should be served by human services. People should not be known by their labels. No one is only a toothache, a neurosis, or a learning disability. The provision of human services needs to be undertaken in an atmosphere of respect and understanding of every individual's uniqueness, with full recognition that people are dynamic, constantly changing in an ongoing process of "becoming." (Eriksen, 1981, p. 9)

This care for the whole person, this humanism, is reflected in all articles. The submissions have one thing in common: they confirm that human services workers are “people-helping professionals.” They serve individuals and groups of all ages in a variety of settings, including community mental health centers, geriatric facilities, agencies serving the physically

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## CHAPTER 2

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### BRIDGE: BRIDGING RESOURCES IN DC TO GUIDE AND EDUCATE

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#### Abstract

Bridging Resources in DC to Guide and Educate (BRIDGE) is the final product of the Spring 2009 Human Services 152 class at George Washington University. This project, led by Professor Honey Nashman and facilitated by Teaching Assistants Lee Goldstein and Natalie Kaplan, aims to gather the most accurate and relevant information about the social service providers and community resources in the District of Columbia. The current disconnect between public/social service provision and the means to access these services is a growing phenomenon for the most vulnerable of citizens. The BRIDGE project will provide pertinent information for all members of our DC community to garner the resources they need, as well as for the agencies who strive to serve them. In creating a comprehensive and viable list of the social service resources available in the District of Columbia, we strive to holistically benefit service providers and clients alike, allowing more accessibility and understanding of the resources available and how they can be utilized by those in need. This project is exemplary of best practices in service-learning curricula, providing students valuable professional development skills and experience working with urban community development and public sector visibility. Further, this project bolsters the

nonprofit/public sector's efforts to improve the lives of DC citizens, fostering an effective public-private partnership between a university and the community at large. By synthesizing and streamlining the wealth of resources available to the DC community, BRIDGE strives to educate and empower the human service sector for the future, fulfilling a long-standing gap between knowledge and access to social services.

## Introduction

While urban localities offer a multitude of resources for those in need, the availability of these resources and how to actually access them are two very different considerations. If one is eligible for food stamps, that is not the end of the process; rather one must locate the food stamp office, fill out an application, and successfully maneuver through the bureaucratic process. Free meal programs at churches and religious organizations are often more informal and require less paperwork, and yet those who are hungry on a day-to-day basis may not know that such programs exist. The current disconnect between public/social service provision and the means to access these services is a growing phenomenon for the most vulnerable of citizens living in our nation's capital. Many factors contribute to the complex nature of poverty, and the lack of access to necessary resources perpetuates the vicious cycle. As David Shipler (2004) writes in *The Working Poor*,

If problems are interlocking, then so must solutions be. A job alone is not enough. Medical insurance alone is not enough. Good housing alone is not enough. Reliable transportation, careful family budgeting, effective parenting, effective schooling are not enough when each is achieved in isolation from the rest. There is no single variable that can be altered to help working people move away from the edge of poverty. Only where the full array of factors is attacked can America fulfill its promise. (p. 11)

Our class' solution was to narrow the accessibility gap to social services for those who need these resources the most. In doing so, we hoped to be a part of the greater effort to ameliorate multifaceted conditions of poverty.

As a service-learning class at George Washington University, HMSR 152 was structured to provide an opportunity for students to engage in service in the community while incorporating

their experiences into the course content. Bringle and Hatcher (1996) define service-learning as a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (p.222)

By engaging in the Bridging Resources in DC to Guide and Educate (BRIDGE) project, students took part in experiential education and service-learning through direct partnerships with some of the largest nonprofits in Washington, D.C., namely Bread for the City and DC Central Kitchen. Reaching out to local nonprofits and community members was a significant aspect of the service-learning experience and a win-win situation for both the students at the university and the nonprofits. As Bringle and Hatcher (1996) note, "Universities have valuable resources that become accessible to the community when partnerships address community needs" (p.221). In this case, the community partners, inundated with their day-to-day operations, were able to capitalize on the services provided by the students to take on an otherwise unfeasible project to benefit their clients.

This service-learning project aimed to gather the most accurate and relevant information about the social service providers and community resources available in the District of Columbia, and to provide this information to the public. Participating students thoroughly researched the various types of services available in the District of Columbia, gaining new knowledge and furthering their academic research on these topics. This process strengthened the university's relationship with its surrounding community, encouraging students to become active citizens and more engaged residents of the city. "Universities are interested in committing their resources to develop effective citizenship among their students, to address complex needs in their

communities through application of knowledge, and to form creative partnerships between the university and the community” (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, p.236).

Although we searched for similar programs on which to model our project and compare curricula, we could not find another project of its kind in the human services field. An example of best practices in service-learning in higher education, the concept behind the BRIDGE project can be replicated at urban colleges and universities throughout the country. While we believe the BRIDGE project’s uniqueness is due in part to the project’s ability to evolve alongside the growing relationships formed with the community partners, its basic design is transferable to any college or university interested in partnering with the surrounding community.

Throughout the semester, students worked on updating the known social service resources and finding new sites to add to our database, while simultaneously learning in depth about specific service areas. Class assignments, including individual research papers, matched their community-based research with their service interests, inspiring creativity and allowing students the freedom to tailor their academic study. During a research symposium, the students presented their findings to all the stakeholders and community members who made the project possible, further sharing valuable information acquired from this campus-community partnership and reflecting on their service-learning experience. As Edwards and Mooney (2001) state:

Student experiences in the service-learning setting shape their understanding of course content while the course content in turn shapes their understanding of the kinds of social contexts and relations characteristic of their service-learning placements. (p.184)

Students demonstrated their growth not only in academia, but as active citizens in the greater urban community. The academic research and discourse spurred by this project is a valuable resource for both the social services sector and institutions of higher education.

### **Methodology: Background to the Semester: Teaching Assistant/Faculty Set-Up**

The idea for the BRIDGE project originated from the desire of a former student of Human Services 152 to locate and map out the social services in Washington, DC. After consulting with the faculty member, the idea was incorporated into the upcoming Human Services 152 class curriculum as the class' service-learning group project. In order to best articulate the evolutionary nature of this project, we will break down the course's progress into phases, showing how each phase of the process built upon the work accomplished before it, as well as to highlight the continuum of ideas and concepts which grew from the original need to map social services in our urban landscape.

### **Community Partnership**

We began our course-development by brainstorming about the various community partners and service agencies with which we had already established significant relationships. In doing so, we could assure the service-learning aspect of the course would be fulfilled by strong community partners who understood the needs of a service-learning class. Our class' close affiliation with our campus' Office of Community Service (the campus hub for student service and volunteer coordination at George Washington University) made facilitating outreach to potential community partners for this project much easier. Additionally, the Human Services Department at GW has worked with many community organizations over the years and has a reputation for fostering successful and reliable relationships between students and nonprofits.

The impetus for the project came from [www.DCFoodFinder.org](http://www.DCFoodFinder.org), an online resource guide created in the summer of 2008 by Healthy and Affordable Food for All (HAFA), which is "a coalition of advocates, service providers and local food activists working to increase access to healthy, affordable food in all DC neighborhoods & nonprofit organizations in DC" ("Healthy

Affordable,” n.d.). At the time, this online database contained approximately 400 resources, the majority of which were food-related, ranging from food pantries to meal services, farmers’ markets, and community gardens. This site had effectively mapped the food-related service agencies throughout Washington, DC. In addition to DCFoodFinder.org, the class utilized *Street Sense*, a local newspaper written by the homeless, as well as two other online databases, Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFCMW) and Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE). Finally, through collaborative efforts we were given access to Bread for the City’s client referral database. Bread for the City is a comprehensive nonprofit service provider that participates in HAFA and is responsible for the creation of Food Finder.

To compile the BRIDGE resource guide from these sources students first called service sites directly in order to verify their information (phase 1). In phase 2 of the project, students were given the autonomy to decide which sites to include in the verification and compilation process. In phase 3, the teaching assistants compiled the data and managed the editing process. The framework for the project can be broken down into these three main phases, which will be expounded upon in the following section. Since the project utilized students working on a class assignment, there was no cost involved in the initial research or compilation, but we did need substantial funding for the final publication. Funding for the publication was provided by the university, via a grant from the Student Association’s Socially Responsible Initiatives Commission (SRI). This commission consists of socially active student leaders from across the university who read grant applications submitted by student groups, class projects, and individuals seeking to make a social impact inside and outside of the university. Our group project received \$4,500 for its further research, development, and publication, which came to be called *BRIDGE: DC Social Services Resource Guidebook*.

The teaching assistants organized a meeting with the project leaders at DCFoodFinder.org to find out more about their resources and to discuss creating a mutually beneficial partnership that would both serve the needs of the service-learning group and provide a tangible service to DCFoodFinder.org. From this meeting, we discovered that updating DCFoodFinder.org was a heavy burden shared by the members of the HAFA Coalition who updated the website every six months. As the deadline for updating had already passed, we realized the 13 students in the class would provide a reliable and efficient means to help HAFA effectively update this online resource. Thus we began phase 1 of the project.

First, we grouped the sites from DCFoodFinder.org into manageable social service categories for each student in the class to look up, call, verify, and update. Each student was responsible for approximately 20-30 sites. Verifying information involved calling each site asking them specific questions (see phase 1 below), recording that information, and entering it into a Google form managed by the teaching assistants.

### **Tools/Technology**

Given the innovative nature and electronic/web basis for our project, we had to think creatively about how we would track and manage the work students would be doing over the course of the semester. A very successful resource we came across was Google's array of applications and programs. Using the suite of Google Apps, which includes Google Sites, Google Forms, Google Docs, and Gmail (<http://www.Google.com/apps/>), we created a project specific email-address: [hmsr152project@gmail.com](mailto:hmsr152project@gmail.com), as well as a Google site specific to the information we would be sharing with the class, allowing us to manage various Google docs and forms through the site. This Google site became our main tool for collecting the updated data for DCFoodFinder.org, as well as the mechanism for storing our data for the final publication. We

also used the site to post group project materials, timelines, outlines, and database information. We only came across one or two technical difficulties, which were related to a student's personal computer. Otherwise, there were no major flaws to this method of tech-savvy academic information sharing. It was a highly successful utility for our class project, and we recommend it as a useful resource for many forms of information sharing.

When a student had called a site, he or she would then go to the website online, fill out the Site-Update Google Form, and press submit. This automatically transferred the form-data into a Google excel document and organized the entries by time-stamp. This way, we were able to document students' progress with their assignments and ensure groups were working together at an even pace.

### **Phase 1--Initial Site Updates and Verification**

#### **Resources Utilized: DC Food Finder and Street Sense**

In phase 1 of the project, the students were first broken up into teams based on the service category they were most interested in updating. In doing so, we hoped to disperse the work evenly among students, as well as to allow students to start thinking about the individual research they would conduct later in the semester. Each student was assigned 20-30 sites from DCFoodFinder.org and *Street Sense* to call directly in order to verify their information, and the groups were given approximately three weeks to update all the sites within their group research category. All necessary information with links to the group materials was posted on the class Google-site. Students requested ten different pieces of information: name, address, phone number, hours of operation/days open, website (and date of last update), primary service, secondary service, transportation, restrictions/requirements, and brief history of the organization. We felt that calling the sites directly and speaking to a representative of the organization or

service provider would be the most effective and accurate way to collect the information we were seeking, as well as to provide the students with a unique professional development opportunity to talk with nonprofit staff members and service providers.

## **Phase 2--Creating a Comprehensive Resource Database**

### **Resources Utilized: Bread for the City, Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, and Women Empowered Against Violence**

Throughout the weeks the students spent updating the sites, we asked them to think about gaps in service, additional service needs at their sites, problems they encountered when trying to contact sites, and any issues that arose when verifying DCFoodFinder.org's data regarding the provision of services. At the completion of phase 1, we brainstormed as a class about important social service needs and additional resources to include in the creation of a comprehensive social services resource database. We came up with four broad categories: health services (clinics, medical support, HIV/AIDS programs), housing (shelters, transitional, permanent, affordable), economic stability (job training, adult education, empowerment), and family services (women's health, domestic violence, counseling, childcare, victims of abuse). These categories also served as broad issue areas from which the students would conduct their group and individual research. After spending three weeks working with the initial categories they selected, students picked a broad research group in which to work for the remainder of the class. From this broad category, they refined their research interests to delve further into a social service issue of their choice (related to the greater group research topic).

Once the students had formed their new research groups, each student was given the autonomy to choose the 10 additional sites they felt were imperative to creating a comprehensive resource guide for the District of Columbia, in accordance with their service category and the

work of their teammates. The students used three additional databases to select the 10 sites within their issue area. We worked with Bread for the City to access their client referral database, and utilized additional online resources from Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington and Women Empowered Against Violence. These databases were then posted on the class website to provide additional resources for site selection and further research. The only requirements for the students in choosing these sites were (a) that accurate information on the site was readily available (ie. that a representative from the service site could be reached via telephone), (b) that these sites provided a significant service, (c) that these sites were unique from their fellow group-members' sites, and (d) that together these 10 sites represented each quadrant of the city (ensuring an even geographic distribution).

### **Phase 3--Project Completion and Research Symposium**

#### **Resources Utilized: GW Geography Department and Healthy DC-Go Local**

Phase 3 involved editing, formatting and adding to the data collected by the class. We took care to update every site listed on DCFoodFinder.org, as well as list several sites that had multiple locations. All sites within our database were then cross-checked with Healthy DC Go-Local, an online database created by medical librarians at George Washington's Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library in collaboration with both Georgetown and Howard University. The database serves as a search engine for health services in DC, and contains information on many of the same sites we had accumulated over the course of the semester. We then Google-mapped the sites for geographic accuracy, making sure they had valid addresses. Once completed, we formatted and sent the database to the GW Geography Department to be mapped using GIS Mapping software according to the categories we felt most accurately represented the primary service each site provided. By the end of the class, we had compiled a total of over 550 sites to

include in the BRIDGE publication. The data was exported from Google docs to Microsoft Excel, and then formatted using Microsoft Publisher.

## **Symposium**

From an academic standpoint, the BRIDGE project provided students with an opportunity to think critically about important social factors and conditions affecting the DC population. The students conducted group research projects within their service categories in order to gain deeper understanding of the state of social services available in DC, including any gaps and shortcomings,. Through this process, students were able to build a body of research highlighting issues in urban poverty and social injustice. Among the various topics were HIV/AIDS treatment and sexual health education, recidivism of ex-prisoners, housing for homeless children, services for victims of child abuse and domestic violence, and job training/adult education programs. The students also conducted individual interviews with representatives from the service agencies they selected. This direct interaction with social service agencies furthered their professional development skills and bolstered their sense of civic engagement in the community. At the culmination of the semester, we held a public research symposium to highlight the students' findings and share their work with the Bridge projects' various community partners and stakeholders. The symposium was held on campus, and provided the students the opportunity to speak publicly in a professional setting.

The students completed this project with the understanding that problems associated with poverty are multiple and interconnected. Recognizing the convoluted nature of these problems is crucial to understanding the many different layers of poverty. This project served as an educational opportunity and an exercise in professional development. Not only did students learn about the city in which they live, but they actively engaged with community members and

organization officials to investigate and report on the most up-to-date and accurate data available on service providers and nonprofit organizations in the city.

## **Publication**

In creating the publication, we had to think critically about the needs of the constituency we hoped would use the publication. In order to create the most useful resource guide possible, we consulted with students who were working at various service agencies, as well as with community partners who work as referral agencies and directly interact with the low-income and homeless populations. In doing so, we tried to streamline our guide to include only the most helpful information to access services in the city.

One of the tenets of our project was to be as resourceful and sustainable as possible. We believe that doing good work and service is a multi-dimensional process, and should be a holistically minded endeavor. We consulted our university's newly founded Office of Sustainability for publishing ideas and production advice. After gathering valuable information, we found Pinball Publishing, a design and sustainability minded printing company based in Portland, Oregon. They were excited to take on our project and have been working with us throughout the past six months to finalize printing and production. The final publication consists of sixty-four 5x7 inch pages printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink. Each entry includes the organization/agency title, address, phone number, hours of operation, transportation (both metro and bus when available), website address, and specific restrictions or important information about the service site. An initial 2,000 copies will be distributed to local nonprofits, libraries, and individuals throughout the community.

## **Conclusion and Future Implications**

Overall, it has been the objective of this project to develop a comprehensive resource database that is readily accessible to community members in need, as well as to public/social services agencies and government officials. The BRIDGE project builds upon the foundation provided by local community resource guides, enabling the university to partner with local nonprofits to update existing social service agency materials, including DCFoodFinder.org. The class had the opportunity to present their research at a symposium event on GW's campus to educate students, faculty, and the DC community about the accomplishments and outcomes of this class project. Finally, the project provided an important mechanism for campus-community partnership and community outreach, and spurred students to look at their campus and local communities as integrated citizens and active stakeholders in the development and viability of their neighborhoods.

BRIDGE is unique in its organizational capacity and feasibility as an informational outreach tool for service providers and service seekers throughout DC. It adds to the existing databases as a print publication and includes a range of services and resources necessary for a sustainable lifestyle. Furthermore, BRIDGE provides basic details about transportation methods, important information that is easily overlooked.

In future semesters, the BRIDGE project will change based on the needs of the students, our community partners, and the recipients of services. The work our students do must be fulfilling, inspiring, and academically rich. Our goal for subsequent semesters is to add to our existing work, to fill in the gaps in service based on research interests and needs within our DC community, and to look toward developing a web-publication to be continuously updated in the future. This is a unique project through which a university capitalizes on its academic strength,

students, faculty, and relationship with its community (Washington, DC), to effect change and help provide important resources and information for the disenfranchised residents of our city, thereby fulfilling a community need.

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## CHAPTER 3

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### YOUTH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: A UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE IN ALASKA

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#### Abstract

Alaska Seeds of Change (ASC) is a university-community partnership between the Anchorage Urban League and the University of Alaska Anchorage. ASC will operate a social enterprise business venture providing employment and independent living skills to a culturally diverse group of at-risk youth (17-22 years). ASC will offer internship and service-learning opportunities for students in applied academic disciplines such as human services. It will undertake applied outcome research in the field of transitional youth services, implementing the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model (e.g., Clark & Davis, 2000; Clark & Unruh, 2009). By involving youth in all aspects of an economically sustainable urban greenhouse business, ASC will help youth improve their personal situations while contributing to community wellbeing by developing the local food production system.

## **Youth Social Enterprise: A University-Community Partnership Planting Seeds of Change in Alaska**

As of September 30, 2006, there were 510,000 children in foster care in the US. Approximately 40% of these children were age 13 through 20 (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2008). Of this number, over 24,000 youth emancipated or "aged out" of the nation's foster care system in FY 2005 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008), meaning that their disposition upon discharge from care is independent living. These youth and young adults face a "startling range of risks to their adulthood success, including homelessness, poverty, incarceration, victimization, early pregnancy, and unemployment... [as well as] higher risks to their socio-emotional wellness" (Samuels, 2008, p. 2). They are also less likely to have earned a high school diploma, participate in post secondary education, or maintain employment that pays a livable wage (Courtney et al., 2005; Courtney et al., 2007). These deficits continue into the early adult years in many cases (Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Lee, J., & Raap, M. (2009).

Available public services and supports for transitional-age youth and young adults (17 to 22 years old) are inadequate and fragmented, funding sources are inconsistent, and those programs that are available are often not developmentally appropriate (Clark, Koroloff, Geller, & Sondheimer, 2008). An example of the discontinuity between the children's and adult systems of care may be seen in the significant drop in the utilization of outpatient mental health services as youth approach the age of majority (Pottick, Bilder, Vander Stoep, Warner, & Alvarez, 2008). In Alaska, the Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study (Williams, Pope, Sirles, & Lally, 2005) found high levels of homelessness among alumni of foster care in Alaska. Nearly 4 in 10 alumni in this study reported being homeless since leaving care, including 3 in 10 who were homeless within a year of leaving care.

The average income earned by this group was approximately \$12,300, which is just over half of the estimated per capita income for Alaska of \$24,361 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003, as cited in Williams et al., 2005). The median income was \$9,500, equivalent to the federal poverty level for a single person household in 2003. Over 77% of alumni (including 73.3% of those who live alone and 78.4% of those living with others) reported that someone in their household received some form of public assistance in the last six months. The Alaska Foster Care Study (Williams, et al., 2005) recommended, consistent with many others addressing the diverse needs of these youth, that additional steps need to be taken to ensure that more youth make a successful transition to adulthood. These steps include system-focused changes, such as extending foster care beyond age 18, improving communication across formal and informal supports for transition-age youth, involving youth in planning, and fostering supportive adult relationships. In Alaska, as in most if not all other states, the system of care is characterized by competing needs that far outstrip the available resources, and there are comprehensive efforts underway to identify more efficient and effective means of delivering services.

### **Alaska Seeds of Change Transitional Youth Program**

Alaska Seeds of Change (ASC) is an emerging university-community collaboration designed to provide much-needed independent living skills and supported employment opportunities to a culturally diverse group of at-risk youth and young adults (17 to 22 years of age), while serving as an internship for university students. This collaborative project will implement a social enterprise model that generates consistent earned income to support program operations through mission-based business activities. It will also engage in applied process and outcome research in the fields of positive youth development and independent living skills.

Central to the mission of Alaska Seeds of Change is the creation of a caring community of youth and adults who work together in the development of a sustainable local food production system. Involving at-risk youth in projects or movements that are compelling and “bigger than oneself” can help them discover and nurture their abilities not only to improve their personal situations, but also to contribute to the larger social good. Growing local food in an environmentally friendly manner while acquiring needed job and other independent living skills represents just such a compelling opportunity. To help youth transition to adult living, we have adopted a program philosophy that explicitly recognizes that youth need more than treatment. These youth (with serious mental illnesses) need jobs that offer skills, dignity, independence, and peers. They need a responsible and caring older adult who can help them to make better choices, learn from their mistakes, and applaud their successes, no matter how small (Rosenberg, 2008, p. 363).

In order to achieve program sustainability, Alaska Seeds of Change will operate an urban greenhouse business that grows, markets, and sells fresh produce in the Anchorage area. The Alaska Seeds of Change greenhouse operation will incorporate an environmentally friendly design that minimizes energy inputs through the use of waste heat to heat the greenhouse. As part of its overall mission, Alaska Seeds of Change will empower at-risk youth to become active change agents in the community, through the development of community gardens in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, leadership in summer programs for other children, and participation in efforts to help end childhood hunger.

### **Program Philosophy and Goals**

Alaska Seeds of Change seeks to incorporate the program philosophy embodied by such exemplary youth-serving organizations as The Food Project of Boston. Founded in 1991, The

Food Project of Boston brings together a highly diverse group of youth and adults who work to build a local sustainable food system in the Boston area. The Food Project offers youth from over 30 communities an opportunity to experience challenging and meaningful work within the context of a caring community in which they are "challenged to step outside the story of who they 'are' or 'have been' and try on a new way of thinking, acting, or being" (The Food Project of Boston, n.d., para. 4). Youth participants in the program work with neighborhood residents in community gardens, run a farmer's market stand during summer months, and volunteer in local food kitchens and homeless shelters, where they prepare and serve food that they have grown. Within this context, youth are exposed to a wide range of real-world experiences and given the feedback, guidance, and support needed to develop independent living skills. One of our goals in modeling our efforts after The Food Project is to take the work that this organization has done and adapt core aspects of the program to specifically address the needs of youth exiting foster and institutional care, many of whom have significant emotional and behavioral problems. While many parallels exist between the needs and challenges of the group of youth served by The Food Project and those targeted by Alaska Seeds of Change, we anticipate that certain modifications will be made to The Food Project curriculum. We are currently seeking funding to support this effort.

Programs such as The Food Project incorporate the "Big Three" elements of effective youth development efforts (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b) – youth participation, skill building, and caring adult mentorship – which represent critical "bedrocks upon which effective programs must be built" (Lerner, Alberts, Jelcic, & Smith, 2006, p. 29). Of these three, youth participation and leadership opportunities have been identified as perhaps most critical to helping youth become active contributors to their own and the

communal good (Lerner, Alberts, Jelicic, & Smith, 2006). This emphasis upon active participation and moving into leadership roles characterizes the work of The Food Project, and are critical elements in the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model (to be reviewed below), which has been chosen to guide the overall development of Alaska Seeds of Change.

A recent qualitative study (Jivanjee, Kruzich, & Gordon, 2008) examining the process of community integration from the perspective of youth and young adults (ages 17 to 24) identifies qualitative themes that are important to success. The findings of this study emphasize the importance for youth-serving programs to establish a collaborative working relationship with youth, one that recognizes and responds to their developmental as well as their personal needs. Youth also identified as important considerations access to practical sources of support and services, the opportunity for establishing supportive relationships centered around shared interests, and the desire to "make positive contributions and to be involved in community activities" (Jivanjee, Kruzich, & Gordon, 2008, p. 408), to find meaningful adult roles, and to achieve a sense of personal fulfillment. These youth valued and actively sought out opportunities to develop their particular strengths and interests, and to achieve their goals in the areas of education, employment, and maintaining stable housing.

A guiding core value of Alaska Seeds of Change is the belief that youth represent largely unrecognized and untapped resources. This is particularly true with those youth who have been considered "at-risk" for poor outcomes as adults, who are often equated with the challenging situations they face or with certain problematic behaviors they display. While some of the youth to be served by Alaska Seeds of Change have demonstrated significant emotional and behavioral problems and have at times struggled to perform adequately in familial, school, peer, and community systems, we believe that "every young person has the potential for successful,

healthy development and that all youth possess the capacity for positive development" (Lerner, Alberts, Jelicic, & Smith, 2006, p. 21).

### **An Emerging Collaboration**

The challenges facing many at-risk youth as they make the transition into young adulthood can be daunting, in particular for those who lack adequate social, emotional, and financial resources. Because of their age and fluid developmental status, this group may be likened to the proverbial “canary in the coalmine,” providing us with critical feedback into the relative health of the larger environment. We see that the obstacles to healthy functioning faced by many youth are mirrored in the larger child and adult populations. Such issues as public health concerns, domestic violence, substance abuse, unemployment, and poor educational outcomes involve numerous interacting systems, calling upon the community to reach resolutions through nuanced approaches that utilize different areas of expertise and resources. Especially in an era of increasingly scarce economic and social resources, solutions to such problems require the active collaboration of various community organizations.

Universities are uniquely situated to bring value to community efforts at change. University-community partnerships can leverage the resources of both partners in ways that bring maximum benefit to the community and provide high-quality learning experiences for students. Successful partnerships are characterized by qualities such as a reciprocal relationship that respects each partner as an equal, a strong commitment to the mission and goals of the partnership, open and continuous communication, and a focus on evaluation and the incorporation of data into program improvement (Bernal, Shellman, & Reid, 2004; Cone & Payne, 2002). Clear purpose allows a university-community partnership to “find ways to preserve the integrity of each partner and, at the same time, honor the purpose of the relationship

and the growth of each party” (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 513).

Buys and Bursnall (2007), reviewing research into successful university-community partnerships, identify several significant benefits to both partners. These include community practice that is informed by research and enhanced student learning. Providing students with the opportunity to explicitly link classroom instruction with practice in an applied setting can be a powerful learning experience. Alaska Seeds of Change has been envisioned from the beginning as a collaborative effort between the university and larger community. The initial impetus for the program actually came from the community partner, the Anchorage Urban League. As the partnership has developed, shared program goals have guided the process. These include (a) the provision of employment and independent living skills for transition-age at-risk youth; (b) providing an intensive learning environment for university students seeking supervised experiences working with youth; (c) the planning, development, and assessment of effective positive youth development practices; (d) dissemination of knowledge gained in these activities; and (e) the demonstration of program sustainability in a youth-serving social enterprise.

### **University of Alaska Anchorage**

The University of Alaska Anchorage (2008), in its current Strategic Plan, has committed itself to increasing the participation of students in service-learning and other opportunities to engage the community. This document also highlights the importance of workforce development to the university. The plan, “UAA 2017,” pledges that the university will “Expand our commitment to make community engagement and service-learning a cornerstone of our institutional identity” (University of Alaska Anchorage, 2008, p. 7). The plan also commits to collaborative efforts between and among programs, schools, and colleges.

Although a relatively young institution, UAA has a demonstrated record of community outreach and support for community engagement. In support of institutional outreach and community collaboration, UAA launched the Center for Community Engagement and Learning in Fall 2000. The university was recognized in 2006 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, being classified as a Community Engaged Institution.

The College of Health and Social Welfare at the University of Alaska Anchorage houses the Human Services Department. Locating a youth-serving community partnership within a human services department makes sense for several reasons, including the interdisciplinary nature of human services, with its integration of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education, and human services' unique perspective within the university that can allow for the facilitation of "deep and meaningful partnerships with communities, so that our communities are better for our academic and professional skills and our programs are better for the participation in the community" (Sweitzer, 2003, p. 7).

The Human Services Department offers both an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and a Bachelor of Human Services (BHS) degree. Students are required to complete two semester long practicum experiences in each degree, as well as a capstone project in the final practicum experience of the BHS. Additionally, a course entitled "Promoting Positive Development in At-Risk Youth" is offered to develop student competency with at-risk youth. Adequate preparation of students for working alongside groups that may experience periodic crises has been identified as an important factor in successful partnership efforts (Brown & Kinsella, 2006), and a primary reason that students who participate in Alaska Seeds of Change will be required to take this course prior to their service-learning or internship experience.

Support for the project has come from the Department Chair and the Dean of the College. The university has also supported the project by funding the development of the service-learning component of the above-mentioned course, and through a faculty development award designed to support the project's capacity to seek external funding for further development efforts. The first author is one of the founders of Alaska Seeds of Change, and a faculty member in the Human Services Department with many years of experience working in children's behavioral health programs.

The Alaska Seeds of Change independent living youth program will serve as an internship and service-learning site for approximately five to seven students from applied fields of study (e.g., human services, social work, justice, and psychology) at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Our overall goal is to foster the development of a community of learning that expands the learning of students beyond the classroom, effectively brings together theory and applied research, and affords adults the opportunity to work alongside youth while positively contributing to the community (Camino & Zeldin, 2006). Future goals include expanding the scope of students involved in these placements to other academic disciplines at the university, possibly including education, nursing, public administration, and public health.

Workforce development issues in Alaska are pressing, and the demand for trained health and allied health professionals exceeds current supply. Alaska Seeds of Change will help address the need in Alaska for entry-level human service professionals who are knowledgeable, competent, and confident in working with transitional-age youth.

The Annapolis Coalition, commissioned by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), developed a strategic planning process in behavioral health that moves beyond areas of weakness in the workforce to the implementation of strategies to

address these shortcomings and to develop a future workforce “that is compassionate, effective, and efficient” (Hoge, et al., 2007, p. 2). One of the seven goals identified in this effort was to increase “the relevance, effectiveness, and accessibility of training and education” (Hoge, et al., 2007, p. 117).

Dodge and Huang (2008) discuss implications of this goal for workforce development, describing several necessary core competencies, which include individualized care that works effectively and collaboratively across different agencies and systems, partnering with natural supports, and the use of strength-based assessments and developmentally appropriate practices. Such competencies are consistent with the focus of human services, and are core elements of the TIP Model and the approach being developed for Alaska Seeds of Change.

Working in conjunction with the Center for Human Development in the College of Health and Social Welfare, process and outcome evaluation projects will be conducted on-site. The results of such studies will be used to inform our emerging understanding of best practices in the field of transitional youth independent living programs and positive youth development, in the design of university curriculum to prepare students to work with this population, as well as in education and advocacy efforts regarding the diverse needs of transitional youth.

### **The Anchorage Urban League**

The National Urban League (NUL) was founded in 1910 as a grassroots movement that worked to bring "educational and employment opportunities to blacks" (National Urban League, 2009, para. 8). The Urban League has as its mission the empowerment of African-Americans, and indeed all Americans, “to enter the economic and social mainstream” (National Urban, 2007, p. 1) of the United States. The Urban League has identified 10 guiding principles and policy recommendations in The Opportunity Compact designed to "improve the chances for

advancement and progress of those living in America's cities" (National Urban League, 2007, p. 1). These principles and recommendations are intended to foster the ability of all citizens to maximize the potential for living productive lives. Economic self-sufficiency, improvement of urban infrastructure, and expanded educational opportunities for at-risk youth are several of the policy priorities identified in this document.

The Anchorage Urban League (AUL) serves as the nonprofit 501(c)(3) parent organization for the program Alaska Seeds of Change. Anchorage Urban League's core values are the promotion of education, advocacy, financial literacy, economic opportunity, and community empowerment. The organization's long-term goals center on community inclusion and mobilization. AUL has proven to be a strategic partner in advancing the planning and early implementation stages of the project. The organizational culture of AUL is one of flexibility and a willingness to approach challenges in the community through innovative, pragmatic, and "out-of-the-box" solutions when necessary. The organization brings significant expertise and experience in business and government, along with deep ties to the Anchorage community.

Anchorage Urban League is working to provide opportunities for educational advancement and economic self-sufficiency for members of minority communities in Anchorage through its financial literacy and independent living account programs, as well as through a partnership with a local housing provider. Its focus on transitional-age youth has grown out of awareness that minority groups are overrepresented among youth transitioning out of care in Alaska. The Alaska Foster Care Study (Williams, et al., 2005) found that African American youth comprise 3.5% of Alaska's youth population but account for 7.8% of the current Office of Children's Services foster care population. Similarly, Alaska Native youth comprise 15% of Alaska's youth population but account for 61% of those in care. Because of this

overrepresentation, and because of the lack of independent living services to help these youth transition to productive adulthood, Anchorage Urban League has committed to developing the Alaska Seeds of Change program.

### **National Network on Youth Transition for Behavioral Health**

In 2002, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (DOE/OSERS) funded the establishment of five demonstration sites across the country to provide community-based transitional services and supports to youth and young adults with serious emotional and/or behavioral disorders. This initiative, known as the Partnerships for Youth Transition (PYT), was based on the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model. Technical assistance and training was administered through the National Network on Youth Transition (NNYT) for Behavioral Health at the University of South Florida.

The TIP Model (Clark, 2004; Clark & Davis, 2000) incorporates a variety of practices and principles found to be effective in transitional services across various settings. Seven guidelines serve to operationalize the TIP System. These include tailoring individual services and supports that build on the strength of young people, a focus on the development of personal choice and social responsibility, efforts to increase young people's competencies, and a commitment from participating communities to focus on collaborative efforts in the provision of services for transitional age youth (Clark, Deschênes, Sieler, Green, White, & Sondheimer, 2008). The TIP Model also emphasizes active, collaborative engagement of young people in a person-centered planning approach, and developmentally-appropriate services that are delivered in normalized, non-stigmatizing settings, with a clear focus on functional outcomes. Five transition domains are addressed within the TIP System: employment and career, educational

opportunities, living situation, community life functioning, and personal effectiveness and wellbeing.

University students engaged in internships or service-learning opportunities at Alaska Seeds of Change will perform many of the tasks mentioned above while serving in the supervised role of transition facilitator. The core practices involved in transition facilitation include helping youth discover their particular strengths and identify their personal needs and goals, collaborative planning to achieve their chosen goals, in vivo teaching of independent living skills and social problem-solving, as well as the prevention of high-risk behaviors. These direct-service strategies are consistent with the problem-solving, strength-focused, and collaborative approach and strategies employed by human services workers in a variety of settings (Mandell & Schram, 2009; Woodside & McClam, 2009).

The TIP model is recognized as an evidence-supported practice. Transition-age youth and young adults have demonstrated progress in the areas of educational and employment outcomes, with reduced involvement in the criminal justice system and lessened impact of mental health and substance abuse problems on life functioning (Haber, Karpur, Deschênes, & Clark, 2008).

Alaska Seeds of Change has been working collaboratively with the NNYT in the conceptualization and development of the program. The NNYT will provide technical assistance, as well as training and consultation in development, implementation, and evaluation/quality improvement efforts. The Transition to Adulthood Program Information System (TAPIS) system for collecting data to assess the progress of youth participants in Alaska Seeds of Charge will be implemented (Clark, Karpur, Deschênes, & Knab, 2005). This electronic system provides assessment of indicators of progress and/or difficulties for youth in 10 transition domains of importance. In addition to providing youth and program staff with information on progress

toward individual transitional goals that can be used for planning purposes, the system also allows for tracking of program-level data that can be used for quality improvement efforts.

### **Local Community Partners**

Alaska Seeds of Change has been a collaborative project from its inception. In addition to active collaboration between the University of Alaska Anchorage and the Anchorage Urban League, the planning process has involved close work with other community partners, including the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Foraker Group.

Operating a perpetual trust whose resources are designed to ensure that Alaska has a comprehensive integrated mental health program, The Alaska Mental Health Trust funds projects and activities throughout Alaska designed to "promote the long-term system change, including capacity building, demonstration projects ... and other activities that will improve the lives and circumstances of Trust beneficiaries" (Alaska Mental Health Trust, n.d., para. 2). The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has supported the Alaska Seeds of Change predevelopment process through the provision of grant funding and technical assistance, as well as advocacy.

The Foraker Group is a unique local partner in the collaboration. A nonprofit organization whose purpose is to strengthen other Alaskan nonprofits, the Foraker Group provides a range of services such as education and nonprofit management services, strategic and business planning, organizational development, and mentoring for nonprofit executives. Understanding and achieving organizational sustainability have been pressing concerns for Alaska's nonprofit community. Foraker has taken a leadership role in promoting these efforts, working with Alaska nonprofits to identify and establish productive collaborations that allow them to leverage their resources while remaining true to their mission and values.

As a partner in Alaska Seeds of Change, Foraker has contributed technical assistance in the development of the business plan for the program, with access to architectural, engineering, marketing, and project management services. Foraker staff has also contributed to the conceptualization of the plan for the social enterprise business aspect of Alaska Seeds of Change.

Other stakeholders include the State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, Office of Children's Services, Division of Juvenile Justice, the Anchorage School District, vocational training programs, housing providers, behavioral health programs, as well as other youth-serving organizations. The Municipality of Anchorage has provided significant support for the project, with in-kind contribution of a long-term, low-cost lease of municipal land adjacent to an electrical power generation plant, and access to waste heat from the plant.

### **Program Sustainability and Next Steps**

One of the more pressing challenges for nonprofit organizations is that of sustainability. In a young state celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood in 2009, Alaska nonprofits have historically relied heavily upon federal and state funding, both of which are unpredictable. Alaska nonprofits are more heavily dependent on government funding than nonprofits in other states; they are also more dependent on corporate and foundation giving. Earned income in the Alaska nonprofits sector lags behind the U.S. average, 34% to 40%. Consequently, the challenge of sustainability is felt keenly in the nonprofit sector. As was mentioned earlier, the situation with respect to funding programs and services for youth is especially problematic nationally, and the situation is similar in Alaska, with inconsistent and/or unclear eligibility requirements and incompatible funding streams often confronting young adults as they turn 18.

In order to achieve future organizational sustainability, the planning process for Alaska Seeds of Change has incorporated a clear focus on issues of sustainability. Several conditions are

seen as emerging best practices for achieving nonprofit sustainability, and include (a) having sufficient unrestricted cash, (b) maintaining a clear organizational focus, (c) balancing the board-staff partnership, and (d) collaborating with other entities to provide efficient and effective resource use.

While these conditions are interconnected, for the purposes of describing the current stage of development of the collaborative, three of these conditions will be briefly highlighted. With respect to the first condition, earned income generation is consistent with Alaska Seeds of Change's mission, and is the primary source of projected revenues for the program. The social enterprise business component of the program exists in order to support the provision of services for the youth. As such, it is consistent with and seen as advancing the mission of Alaska Seeds of Change. In order to avoid the trap of generating income from services or products that have nothing to do with mission, business opportunities have been evaluated carefully. A thorough business planning process, which included a market analysis, has been undertaken as part of the predevelopment process. This process has been informed by continual reference to the mission of Alaska Seeds of Change. For example, the decision was made to not grow flowers, even though such growing efforts are profitable, in order to be consistent with the goals of developing the local food system and impacting hunger and health in the community.

Clear organizational focus, the second condition of sustainability, involves creating a realistic vision of where the program/organization wants to go in the future. Ideally, the envisioned future involves the development of a one-page strategic plan that is a living document used to guide daily decision-making in the program. At this stage in the predevelopment process, the leadership of Alaska Seeds of Change has developed a Logic Model and has articulated its core values and mission. Discussions with potential partners in the community have resulted in

both informal and formal agreements and initial plans to address the needs of transitional-age youth in the community. Continuing this planning process through the articulation of a formal strategic plan is a current project goal.

The fourth and final condition of sustainability in the Foraker Model is collaboration. One recent trend in the nonprofit sector has been the requirement for nonprofits to collaborate. Oftentimes, however, what is not clear is what this requirement actually means to each organization. Collaboration can mean everything from "I know who is working on related issues in my community" to "our organizations are merging." While it is important that organizations engage in a careful and deliberate process as they consider potential collaborative efforts, it is unlikely that nonprofits will be sustainable without collaborative partners. Envisioned as a collaborative effort from the beginning, Alaska Seeds of Change has sought to identify complementary community partners in order to address the numerous and diverse needs of the youth the program will serve. Success in this project will depend upon each partner contributing its particular area of expertise, while actively supporting the other partners in their efforts.

At its most effective, collaboration is an intentional act with others that seeks to accomplish a shared vision. In the case of an emerging university-community collaborative project in Anchorage, Alaska, this shared vision involves a wide range of stakeholders coming together to support the transition of at-risk youth and young adults into productive societal roles. Current services and supports to transitional-age youth are inadequate, and funding insufficient. Workforce training problems in the field of behavioral healthcare call for learning opportunities where students can integrate their classroom knowledge with deliberate, reflective practice in a supervised setting. Our communities stand to benefit from university engagement in the application of knowledge to the practical concerns of its citizens, while the university might

productively expand its understanding of best practices by rolling up its collective sleeves and helping solve the problems that plague our communities.

These approaches, to be truly collaborative, must not only respect the integrity of the organizations that come together, but must especially recognize the importance of enlisting youth as active and full partners. Youth must be seen as capable of transforming not only their own lives, but also the larger community. They must be given the chance to discover their potential interests and abilities through challenging, purposeful efforts that provide meaning and a sense of direction. As we plan and implement our efforts, we will be well-advised to keep in mind an oft-cited quote shared by Margaret Leonard when describing the rebirth of the Dudley Street area in Boston: “A vision without a task is but a dream. A task without a vision is a drudgery. But a vision with a task can change the world” (as cited in Medoff & Sklar, 1994, p. 253).

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## CHAPTER 4

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### USING SERVICE-LEARNING TO DEVELOP COLLABORATION, CRITICAL THINKING, EMPOWERMENT, AND LEADERSHIP IN ONLINE HUMAN SERVICES GRADUATE STUDENTS

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#### Abstract

Online learning has grown exponentially over the past decade. When training prospective human services administrators, meaningful experience geared toward developing desirable skills, such as collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership, is necessary. How do academics integrate into online classes experiential learning? The use of service-learning in higher education has been effective in face-to-face classes but does not have a history of being used in online classes. This author structured two online learning classes that involved group work, reflection, and a service-learning and evaluated the classes' effectiveness in developing collaborative, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership skills. Each tool or component (group work, reflective journal, and the project itself) used in this service-learning experience uniquely contributed to the development of collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, or leadership. Conclusions regarding further research, useful online technology, training and education, and group size were deduced from this study and are provided to the reader.

## **Introduction**

The proliferation of online learning (Fletcher, 2004) has transformed higher education around the world. It has allowed access to higher education in ways that were once thought impossible. Education can now be provided anywhere, anytime, and to anyone (Aggarwal & Bento, 2000). As online education has grown so has research on its effectiveness. Findings during the previous and current decades have revealed that education using the online virtual classroom is as effective as education using the traditional classroom. Furthermore, online education presses forward to further develop effective pedagogy (Palloff & Pratt, 2001).

Despite the evolution of online teaching and learning, one of the biggest challenges continues to be adequately engaging students (Robinson & Hullinger, 2008). Facilitating students' learning of complex concepts and theories and successfully applying what they learn to practice is a major factor in both the traditional classroom and the virtual classroom. Use of experiential activities to bridge the gap between theory and practice is common in many courses and curricula. Experiential exercises that incorporate personal involvement with diverse organizations and communities can help students move beyond the intellectual process (Pope-Davis, Breau, & Liu, 1997; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994).

Combining community-based, experiential activities with online activities engages the student beyond the use of the virtual and at times abstract classroom, thereby minimizing the gap between theory and practice and making the class more real. Community-based experiential activities may include interviews with appropriate professionals, shadowing a professional, observation of human services support group meetings, touring human services agencies, and volunteering at human services agencies.

Although students may have such experiences prior to beginning practica or internships,

these learning experiences are often limited in scope and fall short of addressing the needs of students and of the profession. For example, these activities are often didactic and limited to observing professionals, agencies, or clients. Opportunities involving mutuality and collaboration, leadership, student empowerment, critical thinking, and problem-solving are often limited. Likewise, these experiences lack realism and meaning and are often limited to a one-shot exposure rather than multiple contacts occurring over a period of time. To promote student acquisition of meaningful, real-life experience with diverse public and nonprofit agencies, a more reflective, thought-evoking experience is needed. One method of providing such meaningful experience is using service-learning as part of the online classroom. One of the advantages of service-learning is that it facilitates students acquiring greater depth and breadth of experience by involving them in social, cultural, environmental, and other aspects of the community over a period of time (Burnett, Hamel, & Long, 2004).

### **Service-learning**

John Dewey (1956), philosopher and educator, believed that active involvement in learning is essential to effective education. With active involvement, students discover the relationships among ideas rather than having those relationships presented to them by authority figures. The community is integral to the educational experience, allowing students to take what they learn and utilize it beyond the bounds of the classroom (Dewey, 1916).

### **Definition of Service-learning**

The Commission on National and Community Service has defined service-learning as a method that

- allows students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated

in collaboration with the school and community;

- is integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for the student to think, talk, or write about what they did and saw during the actual service activity;
- provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community, helping to foster the development of a sense of caring for others.

(Silcox, 1995, p. 25)

Service-learning by its very definition provides a structured yet real-life experience involving reflection that allows students to understand their learning process along with learning content. Service-learning moves away from a “missionary ideology” of working “for” the community toward working “with” the community and embodying the tenets of mutuality, collaboration, and equality – all vital to developing a social justice, empowerment perspective toward the diverse agencies and people with whom human services professionals work (Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2000).

### **Principles of Service-learning**

The principles on which service-learning is based can be delineated as follows: (a) learning is enhanced through action, (b) personal development is promoted, (c) civic responsibility is fostered, and (d) a contribution is made to the community (Waterman, 1997). According to Waterman, enhancing learning through action underlies the practice of service-learning. Given the abstract quality of classroom and textbook learning, adding service-learning to the curriculum allows students to more fully experience the subject matter. Students put the

material into practice in a manner that allows them to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others. The relevance of the material becomes more apparent. Furthermore, what is experienced through action is more likely to be remembered (Waterman, 1997).

According to Waterman (1997), one type of personal development promoted through service-learning is increased feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem which can help students feel more empowered and more inclined to take a leadership role. Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977), refers to the perception that one has the ability to bring about desired outcomes. The effects of service-learning on self-esteem are mediated through self-efficacy. As students view themselves as making a valuable contribution, feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem increase, and students feel empowered and more inclined to lead.

In addition, service-learning opportunities tend to promote feelings of concern, care, and responsibility for the community and the nation as they relate to people, institutions, and ideals (Barber, 1991). Service-learning helps students realize that individual and collaborative action can make a difference in the quality of life of people in the community. As students realize the impact of their actions on people served by community agencies and as they collaborate with community agencies, they realize and develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as a sense of empowerment and leadership. Finally, integral to service-learning is that students provide a real service to the community (Waterman, 1997). With real service comes real meaning and easier application of human services concepts and theories.

Historically, teacher educators have often used service-learning to teach budding teachers the skills needed to become successful in the classroom. In the higher education of teachers, studies of service-learning are often quantitative, survey-based, and comparative (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Miller, 1997; Osborne,

Hammerich, & Hensley, 1998; Vadeboncoeur, Rahm, Aguilera, & LeCompte, 1996). Data includes pre- and post-surveys, course evaluations, and final grades. Fewer qualitative than quantitative studies exist (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Boyle-Baise, & Efiom, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Dunlap, 1998; O'Grady & Chappell, 2000; Sleeter, 1995; Tellez, Hlebowitsh, Cohen, & Norwood, 1995). Rather than collecting quantitative data and assessing the effectiveness of service-learning per se, qualitative studies assess attainment of individual goals. Qualitative studies better define and describe service-learning constructs such as empowerment, collaboration, and mutuality that quantitative research may miss. This study represents an effort to combine the collection of quantitative data via self-rating with more narrative/qualitative statements by asking participants to elaborate on their quantitative responses.

### **Methods**

This research project was a mixed methods research design and uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This study examined the impact of an online service-learning project on collaboration, critical thinking skills, empowerment, and leadership. Participants included 23 students in graduate-level human services online classes utilizing a service-learning component. These participants collaborated with five community-based partners to develop training videos and grant proposals. Specific questions were asked regarding the impact that working in a group, using a reflective journal, and developing the service-learning product had on collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership. Data was collected during the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters.

The measure utilized is a tool designed by the author and includes a three-point rating scale (*least, some, or most*) designed to assess each graduate student's perceived level of collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership gained or enhanced by participating in different aspects of a service-learning project. Those aspects included (a) working in a group, (b) using a reflective journal, and (c) working on the service-learning project. The projects were embedded into two different Social Services Administration classes (Staff Development and Supervision and Grant Writing) within the Department of Human Services. After students completed the service-learning project, the assessment tool was administered by using a link embedded in each class's *Blackboard*. Blackboard is the web-based forum or virtual classroom used for the aforementioned online classes. Data was collected after grades were issued to students in each class. The assessment tool (a survey) has been attached to this article.

Descriptive data (means and percentages) were calculated and analyzed for participants' self-ratings of their collaborative skills, critical thinking skills, feelings of empowerment, and leadership skills. Participant responses to open-ended questions were coded for statements related to collaborative skills, critical thinking skills, feelings of empowerment, and leadership skills. Analysis of patterns or themes in participant responses was completed.

## **Results**

Prior to responding to survey questions that rate and elaborate on the rating for group work, participants responded to what they liked most and least about working in groups. All twenty-three participants (100%) provided narrative responses to each question. Fourteen of the respondents (61%) touted the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other as the most

beneficial component of working in groups. Some of their specific comments, which supported their perceptions of the more positive aspects of the class, were as follows:

- I really enjoyed working in groups because you are able to learn so much from your peers;
- Getting to work closely with other students;
- Camaraderie and interaction with group members...[because] online learning can feel very isolating...
- I thought at first [it] was a crazy idea, but [once I] got a feel for the [other] group members...it flowed pretty well.

Four respondents (17%) commented on the value of the experience in terms of enhancing management skills. A sample of their comments includes the following:

- Working in groups helped me use the management skills that I learned from textbooks;
- [It] gave us the knowledge that we will need to be able to work in a group for a future position...
- [It] was a great learning experience, and a primer for 'real-world' projects...

Two participants (9%) indicated their dislike of working in groups with comments like:

- [I liked] nothing...
- I do not like working in groups...

Other respondents seemed to enjoy the social and engaging aspects of group work. When asked what they liked least about working in groups, six out of 23 respondents (26%) cited difficulties with scheduling as a problem. Comments included the following:

- Trying to work around all of our schedules...;
- [It is] hard to get groups together with the extremely busy schedules.

Four respondents (17%) indicated that they least liked having to lower their standards, which in turn potentially impacted their grades. For example, two individuals commented

- The work done by some of the people in my group is not up to my standards;
- Too much of your grade is based on the performance of others.

Two respondents (9%) indicated that they had difficulty trusting other group members to get their tasks done and four respondents (17%) discussed having difficulty tolerating some of the behavior of other group members. One respondent (4%) cited the instructor’s lack of organization as what he/she liked least about working in a group.

The first question that involved ratings asked the extent to which working in a group enhanced collaborative and leadership skills. The results are displayed below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

*Level of Enhancement of Collaboration and Leadership due to Working in a Group*

Skills	Sample	Least	Some	Most	Rating Average <sup>a</sup>
Collaboration	(N = 22)	4.6%	45.5%	50.0%	2.45
Total Participants		(1)	(10)	(11)	
Leadership	(N = 23)	17.4%	52.2%	30.4%	2.13
Total Participants		(4)	(12)	(7)	

<sup>a</sup> A 3.0 scale was used.

The percentage of participants (N=22) indicating that working in a group enhanced their collaborative skills *most* was 50% (11 out of 22) and *some* was 45.5% (10 out of 22). In other

words 95.5% (21 out of 22) acknowledged that working in groups had some to most impact on improving their collaborative skills. This sample's mean rating was at 2.45 on a 3.0 scale. The enhancement of leadership skills was not rated as highly. Only 30.4% of students (7 out of 23) indicated that working in a group enhanced their leadership skills *most*, and 52.2% (12 out of 23) of students indicated *some* enhancement. This sample's rating average was 2.13 on a 3.0 scale.

In reviewing comments, 16 out of 22 respondents (73%) indicated that their collaborative skills were enhanced by the service-learning projects. Students' comments on the aspects of completing the project that helped to improve their collaborative skills included the following:

- We all brought strengths from our own backgrounds;
- We thought and reflected on what we could provide;
- [It] helped me to better see the big picture of working as a team;
- There is no face-to-face contact so it is even more of a test of tact and thoughtful listening and inclusion;
- My collaborative skills have been a little more developed...These skills are transferred to my work and it is tremendous;
- I have collaborated on very few scholastic or job-related group projects...this... project definitely improved my collaborative skills.

Two students (9%) indicated that the service-learning project did little to improve their collaborative or leadership skills. One of these participants resented this writer conducting research on the classes, and the other student indicated that she had much previous work experience that developed her collaborative and leadership skills. One participant suggested including a "lesson" on collaboration and another student suggested giving more guidance throughout the project.

Eleven out of 22 participants (50%) commented that their leadership skills were enhanced. Some of their comments included:

- Working in a group allows you to naturally develop your leadership skills...I have noticed a development [of leadership skills] in myself;
- I learned from his [another student's] example of leadership skills...
- I do think mine improved some...I was the first member of my group to choose project roles.

Some difficulties occurred that are typical of students working in group. For example, one participant indicated that much of the work fell upon two group members, and another participant indicated that she had already developed leadership skills from a decade of working in human services. This last participant acknowledged that inexperienced students would seem to benefit most from service-learning.

Question 5.5 asked if group projects were closely aligned with real world management techniques. Participants were asked to elaborate on their responses. Eighteen out of 23 respondents (78%) strongly and affirmatively responded “yes” or “absolutely.”

- One respondent indicated that group work develops skills such as listening, bargaining, and the ability to compromise.
- Other respondents indicated that working in groups provides experience with supervisory challenges common in the workplace such as dealing with procrastinators, different personalities, and under- and over-achievers.
- Several participants repeated how group work helped with collaboration, teamwork, and leadership.

- Other students discussed how group work helped to make abstract concepts taught in Blackboard discussions, in the reading, and in lectures more understandable.
- Finally, one participant indicated how working in a group facilitated a very dynamic process that parallels working in human services agencies.
- Other less affirmative respondents indicated that little group work was done at his/her agency, and another participant complained that the project was too poorly organized and minimized any gains that might have been acquired.

Table 4.2

*Level of Enhancement of Collaboration, Feelings of Empowerment, and Critical Thinking Due to Using the Reflective Journal*

Skills	Sample	Least	Some	Most	Rating Average <sup>a</sup>
Collaboration	(N = 23)	39.1%	47.8%	13.0%	1.74
Total Participants		(9)	(11)	(3)	
Feeling Empowered	(N = 23)	13.0%	47.8%	39.1%	2.26
Total Participants		(3)	(11)	(9)	
Critical Thinking	(N = 23)	8.7%	43.5%	47.8%	2.39
Total Participants		(2)	(10)	(11)	

<sup>a</sup>A 3.0 scale was used.

As might be expected, the use of the reflective journal had most impact on enhancing feelings of empowerment (*most*: 39.1%, and *some*: 47.8%) and critical thinking skills (*most*:

47.8%, and *some*: 43.5%). In regard to enhancing feelings of empowerment, 86.9% of participants felt somewhat empowered to most empowered by using their reflective journals. The majority of participants (91.3%) perceived that using their reflective journals to process their learning enhanced their critical thinking skills from *some* to *most*. This sample's ( $N = 23$ ) rating averages around feeling empowered and improving critical thinking were 2.26 on a 3.0 scale and 2.39 on a scale of 3.0 respectively.

Respondents were asked to elaborate on their ratings of the reflective journal. Fifteen out of 22 (68%) respondents indicated that the reflective journal was very helpful in several areas of learning and processing. Some indicated that using the journal helped to keep the progress and the challenges of the group project in perspective and helped them to facilitate interactions with other group members and finish the project. Others indicated that the journal allowed them to vent their frustrations and to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Finally, several participants indicated that the reflective journal helped them delve deeper into the lessons learned from the service-learning project. One participant indicated that he/she gained little from the journal but that it helped him/her to stay on task. Another participant complained about the perceived lack of organization of the project. Finally, one participant suggested that topics or questions on which to reflect might help students gain more from reflecting.

A majority of participants (60.9%) rated the service-learning project as most enhancing of their collaboration skills and 34.8% of participants rated the project as somewhat enhancing of these skills. The rating average (2.57 on a 3.00 scale) for the service-learning project enhancing their collaborative skills was the highest of the three aspects (group, reflective journal, and service-learning project) being measured.

Table 4.3

*Level of Enhancement of Collaboration and Feelings of Empowerment due to Participating in the Service-learning Project*

Skills	Sample	Least	Some	Most	Rating Average <sup>a</sup>
Collaboration	(N = 23)	4.3%	34.8%	60.9%	2.57
Total Participants		(1)	(8)	(14)	
Feeling Empowered (N = 23)		30.4%	39.1%	30.4%	2.00
Total Participants		(7)	(9)	(7)	

<sup>a</sup> A 3.0 scale was used.

When asked to elaborate on their ratings for question 8.8 (rating of the overall service-learning project), 13 out of 21 participants (62%) gave favorable responses to the impact and relevance of the service-learning project. Students commented on the impact of the service-learning project on skills or traits such as collaboration, leadership, empowerment, and critical thinking involved in problem-solving. In addition, several participants discussed how rewarding it was that the projects actually helped real nonprofit agencies and how the project helped them (the students) apply abstract and theoretical concepts to actual human services practice. One student discussed how difficult it was to keep the language used in the videos simple enough to be understood by clients viewing it. Not all comments were positive. For example, two students denied feeling empowered and another indicated that he/she had “no clue” as to what the process was. Finally, one participant believed that more should have been done by the agency.

The final question asked for further comments and recommendations. Four out of 18 participants (22%) indicated that they had nothing further to add and another four (22%) were overwhelmingly positive, making comments like “Great job,” “...wonderful semester,” and “great project.” Seven students out of 18 (39%) gave constructive feedback for changes to this class. Comments included the following:

- The instructor should give more structure and direction or guidance to both the students and the agencies;
- Experienced students should be grouped together to elevate their level of work;
- Receiving feedback from the agency after finishing the project would be helpful;
- Creating groups of three participants rather than groups of four or five would allow each group member to become more involved;
- The instructor should decrease the number of posts required.

Again, one student in 18 (5%) indicated that this experience was the worst that he/she had ever had in a class.

In reviewing Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, the highest mean ratings were for collaboration when participating in the service-learning project ( $\mu = 2.57$ ) and when working in groups ( $\mu = 2.45$ ). The reflective journal yielded the highest mean rating for developing critical thinking skills ( $\mu = 2.39$ ). In addition, the reflective journal appeared to have more than some impact ( $\mu = 2.26$ ) on participants feeling empowered, and working in groups had more than some impact ( $\mu = 2.13$ ) on developing leadership skills.

## **Discussion**

Integral to the teaching philosophy of early educator John Dewey (1916), service-learning has played a critical role in education since the early 1900s. Historically, service-

learning has in part served the purpose of facilitating collaboration and mutuality and bridging the gap between theory and practice. With the advent of online learning, one of the greatest challenges to educators is engaging students and providing meaningful learning opportunities geared toward helping students apply abstract concepts and theories to their human services practice. This study sought to reveal students' perceptions of the value of online pedagogy, which used service-learning to develop feelings of empowerment and the skills of collaboration, critical thinking, and leadership. Components of the service-learning projects involved working in groups, using a reflective journal, and completing the project itself.

Each tool or component (group work, reflective journal, and the project itself) used in completing this service-learning experience uniquely contributed to the development of the identified skills of collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, or leadership. Each student's narrative response to the survey helped to further clarify how and why each component contributed to the development of the identified independent variables (collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership).

Despite participants' frustrations with tolerating less contributive students, with concerns about their grades, and with synchronizing schedules, overall, participants found that the collaboration and learning afforded by group work and the service-learning project was beneficial and an effective mode of learning. In addition, several students believed that the service-learning project allowed them to apply the management and leadership constructs learned in their respective classes to real-life situations, thereby facilitating the practical application of meaningful theory. According to participants, use of the reflective journal helped participants feel empowered to understand and analyze their learning process and to use critical

thinking and problem solving skills vital to providing effective leadership, supervision, and management.

In addition to helping to develop collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, and leadership, the service-learning projects had altruistic value in that they involved assisting actual nonprofit organizations. Also supported by participant comments was the application of abstract constructs learned from the textbooks and lectures to the management of actual human services agencies and clientele. Students want to believe they can have an impact on human services agencies and clientele. The completion of these service-learning projects seemed to engender this perception and left students feel empowered to have an impact.

### **Conclusion**

In analyzing the results and discussion of this research, this author reached the following conclusions:

- More research into the value of service-learning to online pedagogy needs to be conducted.
- Several online methods, such as *PBWIKI*, *Skype*, and *Pronto*, need to be made available to students to mitigate the difficulty of meeting online to complete the project.
- Training and education regarding the dynamics of group work should be offered to students to help them know what to expect and how to work effectively in a group.
- Group size needs to be lowered from five to four in order to allow more opportunities for student participation and responsibilities.
- Feedback regarding students' reflective journal entries needs to be provided to further facilitate students' critical thinking skills and their feelings of empowerment.

- In addition to giving guidance and support to students, similarly guidance and support and a more comprehensive project description should be given to participating organizations to facilitate their understanding of service-learning, the students' learning needs, and the specific content of the project.
- A formal method for collecting information from participating organizations needs to be developed to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the project's value to each respective organization.

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## CHAPTER 5

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### BEST PRACTICES IN ONLINE PEDAGOGY AND PROGRAMMING IN HUMAN SERVICES EDUCATION

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#### Abstract

The exponential growth of web commerce, education, and communication has changed how people shop, employees work, friends communicate, and universities deliver content. Courses in every academic discipline from art appreciation to zoology are being offered online and programs and courses are proliferating via the web at extraordinary rates. In order to prepare human services students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, universities must integrate Internet based resources and communication opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This paper reviews these practices and offers helpful suggestions to faculty and administrators desiring to enhance online learning opportunities.

## Introduction

In just over a decade, the Internet has transformed education. Students now “Facebook” in class in front of faculty who earned web based doctorates. The internet has changed how consumers shop, employees work, friends communicate, universities plan programs, and professors research and transmit information and knowledge. As a result of this revolution, courses in every academic discipline from art appreciation to sociology are being offered online and programs and courses are proliferating via the web at exponential rates. In order to prepare human services students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, universities must integrate Internet based resources and communication opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

There are multiple ways to incorporate web-based instruction into human services courses and programs. The infusion of web based curricula into college courses can be envisioned as occurring along a continuum, as shown in Figure 5.1.



*Figure 5.1.* Technology continuum in education.

Traditional university instruction that utilizes only “less” technology is now an obsolete educational paradigm. Multiple studies now offer empirical data supporting the efficacy of online pedagogy (Cook, Levinson, Garside, Dupras, Erwin, & Montori, 2008; Ferguson & Tryjankowski, 2009; Giguere, 2009). These courses and programs offer students vastly more flexibility and educational opportunity as well. Online learning utilizes the Internet with e-mail, online lectures and exercises, group work, video lectures on demand, and online collaboration both real-time and asynchronously. Today, instruction that utilizes “more” technology includes

not only these high tech modalities but also links to sites relevant to fluid course content and up-to-the-minute access to worldwide current events. This chapter attempts to describe the process by which technology can be utilized in undergraduate and graduate human service courses and provides guidance for developing best practices in these courses and programs. It specifically outlines some basic considerations necessary when developing online courses in Human Services.

Table 5.1 illustrates several educational models that utilize multiple pedagogical techniques. These models also represent an historical sequence of the development of educational technology and its introduction and use in the university setting. A brief discussion of each model follows.

### **Model A**

This is the traditional educational model. It has been around for several hundred years and is still emphasized in universities and colleges around the world. Students attend lectures; many live on campus and have easy access to library resources and faculty. They often participate in social and extracurricular campus activities. While many view this as the stereotypical example of higher education in American, a recent study found that only about one in six college students in America are currently educated under this model.

### **Model B**

In this model, students receive an education in the traditional fashion delivered on a college or university campus. The Internet is used to supplement traditional courses. Professors add hyperlinks, study guides, e-mail addresses, and information to an on-line syllabus. A list-serve, discussion web, news group, chat room, and on-line testing further enhance the resources of the web and the educational process.

Table 5.1

*21<sup>st</sup> Century Human Services Education*

<b><i>Pedagogical Components</i></b>	<b>Model A</b> Traditional (up to the mid-1990's)	<b>Model B</b> Traditional/ Enhanced (mid-1990's)	<b>Model C</b> Traditional/ Technology (early 2000)	<b>Model D</b> Total Technology (2010+)
Attends Actual Classroom Lectures	X	X	X	
Actual Interaction with Professors	X	X	X	
Actual Interaction with Other Students	X	X	X	
Actual Access to On-Campus Resources	X	X	X	
Actual Access to Social Functions/Activities	X	X	X	
Utilization of E-mail		X	X	X
Syllabus on the Web		X	X	X
Utilize Web Resources to Enhance Course		X	X	X
Utilization of On-line Discussions, Chat Rooms			X	X
On-line testing			X	X
Attends Off Campus Seminars/Workshops			X	X
Attends Virtual Classroom Lectures			X	X
Virtual Interaction with Professor(s)			X	X
Virtual Interaction with Other Students			X	X
Virtual Access to On-Campus Resources			X	X
Virtual Access to Social Functions/Activities			X	X
Video Conferencing Real-time				X



## **New Pedagogical Issues**

Teaching in a classroom is different than teaching from a remote location using technology that bridges distance (Renold, 2000). In a classroom, where learners are immediate, teachers are much more able and likely to engage students in discussions that utilize both verbal and non-verbal communication. Through the use of pedagogical devices such as overhead projectors, chalkboards, and handouts, teachers can enhance discussions and lectures with tangible illustrative elements. Additionally, individual classes can be modified and revised using Socratic techniques that frame and support learning objectives.

In contrast, the online instructor may have few, if any, real-time student discussions or interactions. It is difficult, but not impossible, to carry on a teacher-learner discussion when time and distance alter spontaneity. Because the teacher may never see the distant learner in real-time, it may be impossible to determine if a student is adequately engaged in the learning process or if he or she is, for example, distracted, disinterested, or otherwise not paying attention. Moreover, issues of academic honesty and integrity are confounded by current technological restraints. It may, for example, be difficult to verify the identity of persons participating in a given class or for an entire course of study. These challenges, though significant, are not insurmountable and can be mitigated by a variety of strategies. The following best practices are in no way exhaustive but provide a good starting place for instructors and departments interested in online human services programming.

## **Best Practices**

### **Practice 1: Consideration of Time Requirements**

As an educational resource, the Internet is unparalleled in terms of its breadth of information and accessibility. An online course, can, therefore, be more time consuming than

presenting content in a traditional classroom. Instructors must make allowances for additional time requirements and the pace of course activities should be diversified and long text-based lectures avoided. Content presentations should be interspersed with discussions and student-centered exercises. Non-text based components should be used to supplement text based materials—these include narrated slides and short video lecture clips (which can now be created with a simple microphone and camera). Relevant case studies and examples should be utilized as often as possible to assist students in understanding and applying course content. Typically, the earlier in the course this is done the better. Student reinforcement through review, repetition, and remediation should be included in weekly presentations. Towards this end, one-on-one synchronous discussions and electronic mail communication can be especially effective. Publisher created resources such as flashcards, learning games, and online quizzes are excellent resources as well.

As communication technology advances, teachers and administrators should consider modifying course delivery. For example, voice recognition software and video conferencing now allow for enhanced teacher-to-student and student-to-student real-time interactions. Assignments designed to identify unique student characteristics should be utilized at the outset of all courses. Student “signatures” (unique writing styles, traits, interests, etc.) can be catalogued and maintained throughout a student’s course of study so that a continuous profile is developed and maintained. This will assist in establishing student identity as well as create a portfolio of student work that can be accessed to demonstrate student and programmatic outcomes. All major written student work should be archived and stored digitally. This will also assist with questions of academic honesty and integrity.

Although these strategies will not mitigate all of the difficulties associated with distance learning, they are designed to provide a sound starting point from which additional systems and procedures may be incorporated into courses and programs to assure quality and suitability.

### **Practice 2: Carefully Consider Which Courses Will Be Offered Online**

The first step in designing an online course may be the most difficult. First, one must select a program or specific course to teach. A simple way to build a single online course is to offer it as a part of a program. If a department chooses to teach a graduate course online, it is important to understand that many older students still may not have had extensive computer training and may lack the skills necessary to take a course of this nature. Conversely, if a program includes many working professionals, this group may already have solid technical skills and a depth of familiarity with the latest computer technology. All online students, nevertheless, will have the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop new skills. It is feasible that you may never actually see your students or attend class. However, instructors will get to know online students often more intimately than the students seen on a weekly basis.

### **Practice 3: Assess Available Resources**

What is available and what is needed? Begin this step with help from staff at the college or university technology center. Get to know who is responsible for maintaining the computers, specifically who maintains the server where your institution's web pages are stored and accessed. Does the institution use a "platform" to host online courses? Blackboard, WebCT, eCollege, Moodle are all examples of "Learning Management Systems" or LMSs. Take advantage of any training the institution offers. Search the web for free tutorials, FAQs, or tips on online course creation and teaching. Vast resources are available for the curious! Review regional accrediting

agency regulations regarding online instruction. Each of the major accrediting bodies has “best practice” guidelines. These should be referenced prior to undertaking course development.

#### **Practice 4: Add Internet and Multimedia Technology Incrementally**

After targeting a specific course, provided enough planning has gone into this endeavor, an instructor may want to start by adding an on-line syllabus to an existing traditionally taught course. This will accomplish two goals. First, it will force the instructor to learn how to navigate the web, create interactive web pages, and add hyperlinks, graphics and lectures to an online syllabus. Second, and perhaps as important, it will introduce the Internet and related technology to students and encourage them to start thinking about the capabilities and benefits of online courses.

#### **Practice 5: Build in Multiple Opportunities for Student Interaction**

Students want student- to-student and student-to-faculty interaction. This can be attained in a variety of ways. The most basic is to divide the class and assign students to one of several smaller discussion groups. In a class of 25 students, for example, divide the students into five groups and instead of having each student send each week’s assignment to the entire class, have them only send them to the other members of the group. This will accomplish two things. First, the volume of weekly e-mail each student receives will be minimized, but also, students will likely become more intimately familiar with other group members.

Provide virtual study sessions. Students are often concerned just prior to exams that they have not studied and did not know what the instructor thought was particularly important material. This can provide an opportunity for interaction. It is important to send out periodic study guides. Providing weekly or bi-weekly study tips and lists of key terms that underscore specifically relevant material that may show up on an exam and encouraging students to study

them in groups can build community. Many of the LMS platforms provide “virtual” meeting rooms where students can interact, study, communicate, or just gossip (like on campus students).

### **Practice 6: Pay Close Attention to Program Evaluation**

Effective assessment and feedback strategies will enable administrators and instructors to identify and meet individual student needs while providing a forum for suggesting both individual course and overall program improvements. There are two major levels where evaluation and assessment are critical: the learner level, which emphasizes student needs, concerns, and directions; and the course level, which seeks to determine if the instructional methods and materials are accomplishing the established goals and objectives.

#### **Learner level evaluation and assessment.**

From the learner level perspective, early in the course it is critical that students contact the instructor and interact among themselves via electronic mail so they become comfortable with the structure of the course. It is also helpful if teachers require students to maintain and share electronic journal entries that identify areas of weakness or concern. It is vital that the instructor contacts students every week. Additionally, each of the following components will help evaluate and assess learner level progress and development:

- Virtual office hours should be established. Evening office hours should be included if most students work during the day. Virtual office hours allow remote students to contact teachers and receive nearly instantaneous responses to questions and comments.
- Pre-class study questions and advance organizers encourage critical thinking and informed participation on the part of all learners. It is understood that it will take time to improve poor communication patterns. Many online programs now include a brief tutorial or online assessment to evaluate student readiness as well as expectations. Free

websites are available to help students determine “am I a good candidate for an online class or degree”? These are an excellent way to begin an online class and should be utilized.

### **Course level evaluation and assessment.**

At the course level, several steps should be taken to allow for the review of goals and objectives. A comprehensive and systematic plan to provide continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction should be included and implemented at the program’s outset. Formative evaluation is used to revise instruction as the course is being developed and implemented. One way to do this is for the distance educator to give students confidential online surveys. These "mini-evaluations" can focus on course strengths and weaknesses, technical or delivery concerns, and content areas in need of further coverage. Formative evaluation enables instructors, program developers, and administrators to improve the course as it proceeds. This also facilitates course content adaptation and can identify major gaps in the instructional plan or the need for minor adjustments. Some additional strategies that educators can use to collect formative data from their distant students include the following:

- Electronic mail can be a very effective way for instructors and students to communicate. Another plus is that while the instructor is eliciting information about classroom learning, students become familiar with the use of electronic mail, a valuable skill.
- Threaded discussion allows instructors to pose questions about the course early. Ask students open-ended questions (e.g., "What snags did you run into on the second writing assignment?") to let students voice their concerns. Follow with probes (e.g., "Then, will you need more information sources?"). Set phone-in office hours but be sure to welcome calls at other times.

In contrast to formative evaluation, summative evaluation is conducted after instruction is completed and provides a database for course revision and future planning. Following course completion, it is important to conduct a summative evaluation session in which students informally brainstorm ways to improve the course. A neutral, objective facilitator can run the evaluation session to encourage a more open discussion. Summative evaluation focuses on the overall effectiveness of the finished product or course and can be used as a springboard in developing a revision plan. It can also be a baseline of information for designing a new plan, program, or course. Some questions that educators may want to ask students when collecting summative data include the following:

- List five weaknesses of the course.
- List three (or five) strengths of the course.
- If you were teaching the course, what would you do differently?
- What would you recommend to a friend planning to take this course?
- What did you think would be covered in this course but was not?
- Would you recommend this course to a friend? Why or why not?

#### **Evaluation methods.**

Within the context of formative and summative evaluation, data may be collected through quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative evaluation involves asking questions that can be statistically tabulated and analyzed, and frequently involves using a scale, check list, or yes/no responses. The following educational components should be regularly evaluated:

- Use of technology - familiarity, concerns, problems, positive aspects, and attitude toward technology.

- Class formats - effectiveness of lecture, discussion, and question-and-answer; quality of questions or problems raised in class; encouragement given to students to express themselves.
- Class atmosphere - conducive to student learning.
- Quantity and quality of interaction with other students and with instructor.
- Course content - relevancy, adequate body of knowledge, organization.
- Assignments - usefulness, degree of difficulty and time required, timeliness of feedback, readability level of print materials.
- Tests - frequency, relevancy, sufficient review, difficulty, feedback.
- Support services - facilitator, technology, library services, and instructor availability.
- Student achievement - adequacy, appropriateness, timeliness, student involvement.
- Student attitude - attendance, assignments submitted, class participation.
- Instructor - contribution as discussion leader, effectiveness, organization, preparation, enthusiasm, openness to student views.

### **Additional Important Considerations**

Distance Education is a means of putting technology to the service of students who are remote from the campus or who seek a more independent learning style. From a faculty standpoint, it is desirable that any Distance Education course serve as part of the regular teaching load and not as overload. It should maintain the same rigor as courses offered through traditional means and originate from and be maintained by the faculty and department in which the course is taught.

An institution needs to describe the faculty resources involved with the new program or site. This should include what impact the proposed program will have on overall faculty

workload, especially for those faculty involved in the program. A description of the balance of full- and part-time faculty members involved, and how that balance will ensure quality, consistency, and connection to the institution should also be discussed prior beginning course or program development. It is critical to determine how adjunct off-campus faculty will be oriented to the particular needs of the program and the ethos of the institution.

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## CHAPTER 6

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### BEYOND PUBLIC SCHOOL: OPTIONS FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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#### Abstract

Both federal and state laws have affirmed that students with disabilities should be included in public school and in the community. However, once students with disabilities, especially cognitive disabilities, graduate from public school, there are few inclusion options for them. This research focused on a program at a small liberal arts college that included adults with cognitive impairments from the community in courses with typical college students. Using a qualitative approach, the study identified the themes, which the participants identified, and the findings from one particular semester. The goal of the program was to provide opportunities for inclusion of both young adults with disabilities from the community and typical students living full time on campus.

## **Introduction**

Since 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has mandated that students with disabilities be included in regular education. As a result, many students with developmental disabilities have been mainstreamed or somehow integrated in public education. Every student classified as disabled by the school district has an Individualized Education Plan, which designates the level of involvement with regular education and typical peers. In some areas of the country, students with disabilities have been very included and have been considered members of the class. However, once a student graduates from public school at age 18 or 21, there is no inclusion mandate for adulthood. Many students with developmental disabilities, including cognitive disabilities, transition to day habilitation programs, sheltered workshops, supported employment agencies, or other environments less inclusive than public school. Young adults with developmental disabilities may have few choices due to problems with funding, transportation, and the availability of services (DiLeo, 2007; Doyle, 2003; Schmidt, 2005). These students are rarely given the opportunity to attend college or have some type of college involvement as are many of their high school peers (Doyle, 1997).

A variety of programs have emerged over the last 20 years to allow young adults with cognitive disabilities to experience campus and college life. One source for the coordination of postsecondary information, <http://thinkcollege.net>, has registered 152 programs nationally. Such programs range from a separate day habilitation program on the campus with little interaction with college students to full inclusion with students living in the residence halls and taking courses (Hall, Kleinert, & Kearns, 2000; Hamill, 2003; Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2004; <http://thinkcollege.net/>). The funding streams for this type of programming are varied.

The following highlights are examples of programs throughout the US and Canada.

Career and Community Studies, a program through The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), began as a result of the faculty's desire to provide a postsecondary education program for a nontraditional population, those with cognitive limitations (Carroll, Blumberg, & Petroff, 2008). Students attend for four years, taking a variety of liberal arts courses and completing internships. They are provided with mentor support and course modifications and adaptations.

Strive University, a program sponsored by University of Southern Maine, supports young adults with developmental disabilities who attend classes and interact on campus. In 2004, the program assisted six individuals with Down syndrome (Schmidt, 2005). Students live in an apartment with a resident adviser, learning to live independently, and audit classes on campus. The program requires students to pay part of the fee for tuition, room, and board. The other funding is secured through donors and state and federal grants.

Asbury College and Jessamine County Public Schools have a program specifically for students who are in high school through age 21. Seven students ages 18 to 21 started the program and attended Asbury College as a component of their education program through the public school (Hall, Kleinert, & Kearns, 2000). Students attend several classes and extra-curricular activities with supports at no cost to the student or the public school.

ENHANCE Program, Trinity College of Vermont (Doyle, 2003), though now closed, was a successful program model from 1989 through 2000. The students attended self-contained classes on campus when the program first began and were later fully included on campus. Students utilized the audit system, an established registration format, to register for classes. The program established the use of the Syllabi Adaptation and Negotiation Plan for students, faculty, and peers. Students participated with a support person, either natural supports or paid Habilitation Aides.

On-Campus, at the University of Alberta, Canada, has included students with developmental disabilities for over 20 years. On Campus was one of the first programs to provide individuals with cognitive disabilities with an opportunity to experience college life. Students generally audit three courses per semester and work with an Educational Facilitator to learn as much as possible throughout the courses. Students may participate in work, volunteer, or sports activities (Brown, Fay-Verschurr, Logan, & Rossner, 2007).

There are examples in the literature of different types of programs that support people with cognitive impairments in a postsecondary setting. Additionally, the steps to set up a program or organize a program are readily available in the literature (Grigal, Neubert & Moon, 2002). The leadership of most programs agree that success requires a joint effort on the part of the post-secondary institution, its faculty, the community, adult service agencies, the individual participant, and his/her family.

### **The Cazenovia College Program**

Cazenovia College, in upstate New York, is a small, liberal arts college with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services program. It has a strong commitment to the community and to partnering with organizations. The faculty at the college believes that including young adults with cognitive disabilities from the community adds to the diversity and richness of experiences on campus. They also believe that it provides an opportunity for typical college students and those with cognitive disabilities to have meaningful personal interactions.

The Human Services and Continuing Education program at Cazenovia College began including students with developmental disabilities in the Therapeutic Recreation class in 2000. Since then, students with developmental disabilities have been involved in auditing classes, volunteering, working, and having lunch. Some students have individual supports through

person-centered planning, and others attend a day habilitation program and participate on campus as part of their day program. Several other students attend one course as a component of their educational programs at a local public school. Fulltime day students attending Cazenovia College also attend the Therapeutic Recreation class as a component of their coursework. The following research is based on this component of the inclusion program.

### **Methods**

This research was based on a qualitative approach. Qualitative research allows the researcher to study a group or phenomena and develop conclusions based on the experience of the participants (Biklen & Moseley, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hagner & Helm, 1994). Experiences were analyzed and findings were developed based on the participants' perspectives. Three groups of individuals were involved in the research process: 16 continuing education students with developmental disabilities, 8 parents/guardians and other family members of the continuing education students, and 12 full-time college students. I interviewed the continuing education students about their experiences and developed an open-ended questionnaire for the parents and families. Fulltime students kept weekly journals regarding their thoughts about the program and how it affected them. The research was conducted over one semester during the Therapeutic Recreation class. The course was set up to accommodate students with developmental disabilities to attend with full time day students.

The students with developmental disabilities registered through the continuing education program and were identified as the continuing education students throughout the course. The continuing education students attended the class one day per week for 90 minutes. Most continuing education students then stayed for lunch in the college dining hall. The students worked together on various activities from volunteering on campus to learning Spanish.

## **Findings**

The data was analyzed using a constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987; Bodgan & Biklen, 1992). Several themes were identified throughout the interviews, open-ended questions, and student journals. The themes were based on the perspectives of the participants (both continuing education and full time day students) and families/guardians. The themes were divided into two sub-categories, the continuing education students and their families/guardians, and the full-time day students.

### **Themes from Continuing Education Students**

#### **First college experience.**

This was the first college experience for all the continuing education students. They had gone to a public high school and several were in an inclusion program in high school but none had been involved in college prior to this experience. They and their family members believed that this was one of the most positive experiences of their post high school life.

#### **Typical developmental process.**

Going off to college is a process that many students look forward to in high school. Many siblings of the continuing education students had gone off to college, so it seemed to fit the expectation of the families. Many of the continuing education students stated that the possibility was not even discussed with them. Two parents stated that a community college in the next county had a program but it was a day program housed on the campus with very little interaction with college students.

#### **Meet non-disabled college students.**

For all of the continuing education students, there was little opportunity to make friends with non-disabled peers post high school. All of the people who attended day programs or

vocational programs with them also had developmental disabilities. There were limited opportunities in the community to make friends and see people on a regular basis.

**Encourages other opportunities on campus.**

Attending the class once a week became a springboard for a number of students. Once the door was opened for them and they gained confidence, they and their families wanted more experiences. As a result, students volunteered and worked on campus, they attended other courses, gave presentations, took exams, and participated in field trips.

The following students' comments detail their perspectives, providing an understanding of their experiences:

- “The other students make me feel good.”
- “I want to come back for more.”
- “It was really cool.”

Parent comments included the following:

- “She is having behavior problems everywhere else but this class.”
- “She has never paid attention to any class as much as this one.”
- “She can't believe that she is attending a college class.”
- “He looks forward to this class each week. It is his favorite thing to do.”

Overall, the continuing education students completed the class with positive experiences. For some, it improved their confidence and self esteem which allowed them to go on to jobs or training programs. For others, it broadened their world and they begin asking more questions and advocating for more opportunities.

## **Themes from the Full Time Day Students**

These students were full time students expecting to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services. They were required to take this course as a component of their degree or chose the course as an elective. The students were informed on the first day of class that the course was an inclusion model and that students with developmental disabilities would be participating in the class with them. The expectation was that students would mentor the continuing education students throughout the semester as a component of the class. The following themes were consistent throughout the semester.

### **Recognition of this population.**

Many students in the class had very little personal experience with young adults with developmental disabilities. Despite being educated under the auspices of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, many of them reported in their journals that this was their first experience with people with cognitive disabilities. They did not recall being personally involved with students with any significant disabilities in high school.

### **Challenged assumptions.**

As is the case with the general population, the day students had preconceived ideas and assumptions about the abilities of the continuing education students. By the end of the semester, the students were remarking about continuing education students' abilities, talents, and skill levels, which were often overlooked once their diagnoses were revealed. The semester long experience changed the way students thought about people with developmental disabilities.

### **Developed opportunities.**

The experience of working next to someone with a cognitive disability opened students' eyes to possibilities for work in the human services field, as well as to how important community

inclusion is for everyone. Some students secured employment through this experience. Some developed friendships that they never would have had and still have those friendships today. Others received part-time jobs as on-campus support people for the following year.

Student comments from interviews and their journals emphasize the themes and the power of the experience:

- “I never thought I could do this. I always thought that I would work with the elderly.”
- “I learned about inclusion and integration in my other courses and now I am doing it.”
- “There are all kinds of ways to include people with disabilities. I can create my own ways.”
- “I’ve learned from this class how often people with disabilities are devalued.”
- “I have learned that people with disabilities have a lot to say. They should not be spoken for or told what they want out of life. “
- “Everyone works at their own pace.”

As several of the students wrote in their journals, “this is not something that I can learn from a book or a lecture or a video. I really had to experience it.” The general themes from all groups of participants support the concepts of inclusion and integration.

### **Limitations**

Nevertheless, the study included some limitations. For one, the number of continuing education students in class changed from week to week due to their day habilitation programs’ policies, and therefore the groupings changed as well. Also, students had varying needs such as visual impairments, sensory integration issues, and deafness that had to be accommodated and addressed week to week. The day students attempted to meet everyone’s needs from week to week but it was not always possible. As with many programs, transportation was an issue for

some students. There is no public transportation in this community, a factor which limited who could attend the program. Finally, this model worked for some students and not for others. It was only one day per week, which for some students was not enough time to get acclimated, but for others, was a stepping-stone for the future. While the goal was for all students with cognitive impairments to move on to a more inclusive setting, only six students decided to audit courses and participate in other ways on campus or moved on to competitive jobs.

### **Discussion**

The overall benefits of the program are significant for the college, the community, and people with cognitive disabilities. This type of program includes students who have never before been included on a college campus. It provides a setting for same age peers to interact on campus. It creates experiences for students with and without disabilities. Moreover, it gives the typical college students who are not in the class an opportunity to interact with students with significant cognitive impairments because the students are on the college campus and in the same physical space as the typical college students. They interact in the dining hall, the hallway, the gym, and the library. The college community has a different perspective of the abilities of people. The students learn about themselves and a different population. Finally, the program promotes the mission statement of many colleges and universities.

### **Conclusion**

The issue of inclusion, how successfully to include people with developmental disabilities, is an area of scholarly development for human services educators. As human services educators, we should be taking the lead in developing diversity in our programs and that diversity should include people with developmental disabilities. The level of impact on students, the college community, and families is significant. This issue has been investigated, and there is

a developing solid knowledge base of research. With additional research and investigation, we will be able to develop new programs and new avenues of inclusion in human services curriculum.

Human services education programs have the mission to create a better world for individuals and improve their quality of life. We achieve these goals by accepting and understanding others, providing a foundation in theory and experience, and increasing the exposure of students to new ideas and opportunities.

The call is out for postsecondary institutions to develop and support some type of program for young adults with cognitive disabilities. There are resources, funding, research, and agency support for programs on campus. “Colleges ought to acknowledge that they have never given these people a chance, and they ought to give them a chance” (Schmidt, 2005, A36-A39).

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## CHAPTER 7

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### HARM REDUCTION AND HUMAN SERVICES

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#### Abstract

Across fields of practice, harm reduction has come to be respected as a non-coercive form of direct practice; it rejects paternalism in favor of client self-determination. In this way, it serves as a corrective to service models, which favor social controls over efforts to affect social change. With its emphasis on client autonomy, this approach is fundamentally consistent with the Human Services Code of Conduct. After all, a cornerstone of harm reduction is that socially vulnerable clients, including stigmatized groups such as drug users, are treated with dignity as normal human beings. Building on these practical approaches to public health, the U.S. Harm Reduction Coalition formed to address the needs of drug users in the US. The Harm Reduction Coalition (n.d.) defines the practice as a set of interventions, which seek to "reduce the negative consequences of drug use, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence. Harm reduction strategies meet users 'where they are at' addressing conditions of use along with the use itself" (para. 1). The following considers the history of this practice as well as a discussion of its application in a wide range of settings, as described by practitioners.

## **Introduction**

“Human service professionals respect the integrity and welfare of the client at all times. Each client is treated with respect, acceptance and dignity,” reads Statement 1 of the Human Services Code of Conduct (National Organization for Human Services [NOHS], 1996). Under, “The Human Service Professional's Responsibility to Clients,” Statement 13 notes, “Human service professionals act as advocates in addressing unmet client and community needs,” (NOHS, 1996). These calls for “dignity” and consideration of “unmet client and community needs” are fundamentally consistent with the harm reduction approach to practice used in a range of practice settings around the country. Through a wide array of non-prescriptive approaches to public health, policy, and services, harm reduction advocates have brought a range of socially vulnerable, hard to engage client populations into policy and treatment circles.

To make this case, the paper briefly reviews the history of the harm reduction movement in New York. It considers the work of groups including the Young Lords, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, and Housing Works. The paper looks at the ways these groups borrowed from the work of international harm reduction groups to influence U.S. AIDS policy and practice. It considers the ways HIV prevention policy is mired in a decades-old conflict between criminalization and prevention of social problems, between advocates of social control and those in favor of policies that support self-determination and personal freedom. It includes a discussion of applications of theory to practice.

### **Statement & Scope of Problem - Historical Perspectives**

Much of the ethos of harm reduction involves rejecting prohibitive politics. To fully understand this movement, it is useful to revisit the logic of the Temperance Movement, which sought moral reform and the prohibition of the consumption of alcohol (Gusfield, 1986). The

18<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was ratified in January of 1919 and went into effect the following January. The era set in motion a cavalcade of unintended consequences as markets for alcohol consumption moved from legal regulated commerce into the providence of an unregulated black market, which involved sub legal approaches catering to market demand (Merton, 1936). Violence and crime followed. What did not occur, however, was the reduction of the consumption of alcohol. And by 1933, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was repealed with the 21st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Gusfield, 1986).

### **Criminalization vs. Prevention**

Over the next three decades the welfare state expanded simultaneously with social movements involving labor, civil rights, women, and people on welfare. By the mid-1960's, these movements started to encounter a backlash over the expanded welfare rolls. With his unsuccessful presidential campaign of 1964, Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater introduced crime as a panic issue. While it failed in 1964, crime succeeded as an election issue in 1968, and Nixon was elected, with the help of his 'Southern Strategy', which radicalized crime, welfare, and poverty. Policy emphasis shifted to crime control, rather than welfare provision or prevention. Nixon's election marked a striking policy shift, with a new emphasis on a prohibitive approach to crime under a new 'War on Drugs.' Rather than provide services to alleviate poverty, the new emphasis was on criminalizing it (Shepard, 2007b). The Rockefeller Drug laws of the early 1970's are a prime example of this philosophy.

Faced with increased attacks on social movements under the new administration, a number of groups sought to protect their communities and fight back. The Black Panthers organized a food program to support their community in Oakland. The Young Lords, a Bronx based direct action of the same vein, organized a number of forward thinking, audacious acts of

direct action, aimed at cultivating a more responsive system of public health for poor people and social outsiders. In 1970, the group took over a hospital, Lincoln Hospital. The group's list of demands included calls for

- Spanish language translation for services,
- An acupuncture services/detox program (funded by the city in 1971),
- A consumer bill of rights.

Most would later become common practices and policy in New York State. "This was before the advent of patients' rights, and the majority of doctors treating low income residents did not recognize health as a right. But regarded it as a privilege..." writes Mickey Melendez (2003), who participated in the action. "We were trying to replace that demeaning system with one based on respect for human dignity" (p. 171). The group called for a public health program, which actually favored health over social controls. The Lincoln Detox and acupuncture program would become a model for treatment for people coping with heroin addiction. Harm reduction advocates a decade later would look to the model of self-determination for drug users (Shepard, 2009).

### **HIV, Safer Sex, and the Helms Amendment**

The limitations of the criminalization approach would become clear during the HIV/AIDS epidemic a decade later. Throughout the early years of the AIDS epidemic, AIDS activists grappled with core questions about the appropriate approach to HIV prevention. While some suggested HIV prevention should include a Temperance era, abstinence approach that called for strict prohibitions of sexual contact (Gusfeld, 1986), others called for a more humanistic approach. "You must celebrate gay sex in your writing and give men support," Dr. Joseph Sonnabend counseled Richard Berkowitz and Michael Callen as the three worked on a

HIV prevention pamphlet in New York in the early 1980's (Berkowitz, 2003, p.121). Despite this advice, Berkowitz and Callen came close to giving into the widespread panic and their own health concerns by descending into a world of condemnations of promiscuity. Yet, rather than become the Carrie Nations of gay culture, Berkowitz and Callen recognized this approach would not work. If one asks gay men, much less anyone else to give up sex, the result is usually anger. All or nothing propositions result in variations between hysteria, repression, and inevitable lapses. For many, a world without sex is not worth living in. Prohibition is often more dangerous than acknowledgement, careful expression, and prevention.

While it had never occurred to Berkowitz, Callen, or Sonnabend that latex offered the life saving compromise needed, they would soon come recognize its utility. From here Berkowitz and Callen built on the lessons of gay liberation to draft, "How to Have Sex in an Epidemic." The result is a revolution allowing for personal and political protection for sex and the liberation movement which dismantled the shackles around it. Queer theorists to this day still look to this seminal essay (Berkowitz, 2003; Crimp, 1988). The lessons of the tract became core principles of HIV prevention activism of the next two decades. Core principles included key insights about risk reduction:

- Get informed about high and low risk activities.
- Be honest about needs, desires, and risks.
- Meet a person where they are.
- Practices, not places spread HIV.
- Provide safer sex information, as well as tools including microbicides, condoms, lube, and clean syringes.

Yet, not everyone was comfortable with such frank approaches. In October of 1987, North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms introduced an amendment into an appropriations bill to fund the Department of Health and Human Services. The amendment called for a ban on funding to the Centers for Disease Control, because it included sex positive language in its federally funded HIV prevention programs. The amendment prohibited wording that might “promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexual activities” (see Crimp, 1988; Duggan and Hunter, 1995, p. 134). In the following year, 1988, Helms added another restriction to effective HIV prevention policy. Helms successfully moved an amendment to S 1220 AIDS Research and Education Bill banning federal funding for syringe exchange programs. In so doing, Helms again linked federal support for HIV prevention with prohibitive politics of social control and abstinence.

### **Best Practices: A Harm Reduction Movement**

Faced with the prohibitionist logic of Helms and his ilk, HIV prevention activists built their own movement to challenge the moralists, and a harm reduction movement was born. The roots of this movement are located in any number of directions. Many involved in syringe exchange look to the English Merseyside Model developed in 1988. Its core principles are the following:

- HIV prevention takes priority over drug treatment.
- Abstinence is not a realistic or feasible goal.
- Create ‘safety nets’ to reduce harm.
- Provide user-friendly services, which attract users; reduce barriers to care.
- Provide for the whole person.

The Canadian approach to harm reduction is built on a similar set of intervention approaches used to reduce drug related harm. Key aspects of this model include the following assumptions:

- Drug use is a given.
- The user is treated with dignity as a normal human being and is expected to behave as such.
- Harm reduction is the first step to reduce drug use.
- Respect and dignity engage many who are outside of care. (Elovich, 2002; Springer, 2002).

Building on these practical approaches to public health, the U.S. Harm Reduction Coalition formed to address the needs of drug users in the US. The Harm Reduction Coalition (n.d.) defines the practice as a set of interventions that seek to "reduce the negative consequences of drug use, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence" (para. 1).

- Harm reduction is a public health approach that aims to reduce drug-related harm experienced by individuals and communities, without necessarily reducing the consumption of drugs.
- Harm reduction strategies meet users 'where they are at' addressing conditions of use along with the use itself.
- Harm reduction challenges social service provision and moral/criminal/disease models of drug use.
- Harm reduction emphasizes collaboration and partnership rather than repression and incarceration.

- Harm reduction emphasizes a pragmatic, non-judgmental approach aimed at collaboration. Providers and service participants work to identify high risk behaviors and reduce these behaviors (Elovich, 2002; Springer, 2002).

The Harm Reduction Coalition's Donald Grove (2007) has worked in harm reduction for nearly two decades. He summarizes some of these basic principles of harm reduction.

Harm reduction is an approach to drug use which accepts that people are going to do drugs, despite the fact that they're dangerous or despite the fact they are socially disapproved of, to put it mildly, or that they are socially stigmatized is a better way to put it. So given that people are going to do these things despite the beliefs that we as a culture hold about drugs, given that, harm reduction is a philosophy, an approach and a clinical method that is about accepting that people are going to do something that other people don't like, and therefore rather than ostracizing that person or trying to put obstacles in their way, saying OK, what is the best possible way that you can do this the least harmful, and the way that you can do this which is going to not create catastrophes for you or for your family or for the society you live in...I'd say for the purposes of the dialogue that's going on in the drug treatment and in the AIDS community, harm reduction is about drugs, but harm reduction is ordinary behavior. You know, if you're a mountain climber, well, that's risky. But you have special boots and things like that. It doesn't mean you're not possibly going to die, or slide down the southern slope of Mount Everest or something like that, as people have done. But it means that there are things you can do to reduce the possibility that that will happen, because you're going to do this risky thing anyway. Driving is dangerous.

Through the years, this pragmatic approach to high-risk behavior came to be valued as an effective way to engage hard to reach populations and provide services (Denning, 2004; Marlatt, 2002; Shepard, 2007a; Tatarsky, 2002).

Part of the utility of harm reduction is its capacity to bridge the divide between direct action and direct services. From San Francisco to New York, U.S. based harm reduction programs exhibit the passion of direct action spawned this movement. At times this approach involves fighting against policies that restrict the ability to meet client needs or to carry out harm reduction programs. It also means fighting to create space for innovative, less paternalistic programming. “[S]ometimes you have to use direct action to muscle your way in to get the funding,” explains Kate Barnhart (personal communication, 1, 15, 2006), an ACT UP veteran who has used her activism in human services agencies to provide services for homeless queer youth. She continues:

Because if you don't fight for a piece of the budget, you're not going to get one. Even if you're just asking for a crumb you still have to fight. And I think we don't have or want to be the folks who spend a lot of money on a lobbyist, or like a lot of lobbyists. We don't want to become like the American Cancer Society, where god knows what percentage of their budget goes to lobbyists and not to direct services, and I hate that. I'd rather go in and do a quick, hard, fast direct action that has the same feel to the recipient as maybe a softer, more polite, lobbying. Direct action is cost effective sometimes.

Barnhart alludes to the point that harm reduction groups are often organized around direct client needs, with few extra resources for other forms of lobbying. But more than advocacy, the direct action Barnhart refers to involves gestures of freedom, some of which are not deemed legal. Ghandi was famous for leading his followers to make salt, even if it meant facing arrest

and forcing a change in laws. The campaign, the Salt Satyagraha, challenged a British salt tax when the English still ruled India by colonial law. The campaign began with the Salt March to Dandi in 1930, and it ended with the peaceful end of colonial rule in India (Ackerman and DuVall, 2001). A range of movements, including the U.S. Civil Rights and AIDS movements, which spawned harm reduction, have borrowed from this approach. Direct action is a historically informed approach to enacting a just policy response and approach to power, in an image of a better world.

The human services field has long recognized the legitimacy of this practice. Statement 10 of “The Human Service Professional's Responsibility to Clients” in the Human Services Code of Ethics states, “Human service professionals are aware of local, state, and federal laws. They advocate for change in regulations and statutes when such legislation conflicts with ethical guidelines and/or client rights” (NOHS, 1996). Much of the harm reduction movement builds on this ethical commitment to client rights. Statement 10 of the Human Services Code of Ethics concludes, “Where laws are harmful to individuals, groups or communities, human service professionals consider the conflict between the values of obeying the law and the values of serving people and may decide to initiate social action,” (NOHS, 1996). Such social action includes a wide array of approaches to action, some involving lobbying, others involving the mobilization of bodies and even civil disobedience.

New York based groups including ACT UP, Moving Equipment, Housing Works, and CitiWide Harm Reduction were born of this radical approach to public health aimed at meeting unmet needs (see Shepard, 2002, 2007a, 2008). ACT UP’s syringe exchange program in the Lower East Side is known as the group’s longest running act of civil disobedience. Building on the knowledge of users, the group understood syringe exchange as a life saving intervention. So,

the group members were willing to face arrest, committing civil disobedience to give away clean syringes to users. Once in court, activists made the legal argument that the intervention was a “Medical Necessity” to save lives. The judge bought the argument. Charges were thrown out (Elovich, n.d.; Springer, 1991), and the city started a syringe exchange pilot program, funding a number of these small social movement groups that became harm reduction organizations.

Donald Grove (2007) was active with ACT UP and the harm reduction groups that grew out of this period. He recalls this time in 1990:

I got involved in the ACT UP needle exchange, which at that time was underground, although it was openly operating with the intention to sort of force the hand of the city to make syringe exchange legal. And indeed eventually that happened, although it was the state that took it on and the powers of the health commissioner. The state which said, OK, if the programs operated in this way and do these things blah blah blah, then they can provide drug injectors with sterile syringes on a one-for-one basis: you bring me ten used syringes and I’ll give you ten new ones. It’s a one-for-one exchange sort of system. In 1992 syringe exchange became legal, and there were some ACT UP syringe exchanges which became legal programs and then there were also some community based organizations which had also endeavored to create syringe exchange, and they also became legal programs. It was never all just ACT UP. And I had never heard of the expression harm reduction before, and had never really thought about anything except the idea that I don’t want to get AIDS or HIV simply because there’s a law saying they ought to get it. And that was the approach I took to syringe exchange at that time.

Grove notes that harm reduction was actually written into state laws and policies for the new programs. He explains:

And essentially what that means is a low threshold model recognizing that we're working with a population, which has strong reasons to be furtive about what they're doing. Can't necessarily operate on a regular schedule, etc., etc. So the programs are anonymous, the programs have flexible hours. We do a lot of things to try and make syringe exchange as available as possible to the people who need it most urgently.

This is not to suggest harm reduction did not exist before needle exchanges. Rather a range of groups has long made use of these highly humanistic approaches to care (see Addams, 1912). In social work, there is the old expression that workers must meet the person where the person is at. This is a cornerstone of humanist human services practices. Yet, many traditional programs fail to incorporate this model. Instead, they put stipulations on care, following paternalistic models of control, rather than caring for populations in need (Abramovitz, 2000).

Many early harm reduction groups organized their programs and organizations in a manner that challenged these traditional models of care. Charles King (personal communication, 8, 15, 2005), one of the founders of New York's Housing Works, a harm reduction advocacy and AIDS service organization, describes the way he and his organization's co-founder, the late Keith Cylar, thought about alternate approaches to care that reduce barriers to care:

So actually where Keith [Cylar] was, where this was sort of his force, was in his attack on contemporary social work theory. Keith was absolutely the most insightful about the need to tear down existing social work structures. We talked a lot about breaking down boundaries. Boundaries are so important in social work. And how instead of trying to create the right boundaries what you needed to do was break down the boundaries that became barriers. You talk about fostering dependencies and how boundaries could

actually foster that rather than preventing it.... Foster issues around transference. They create this false sense of divide that isn't real because we're human. We're connected.

Many harm reductionists built on this highly humanistic ethos of care.

Donald Grove (2007) describes this contrast between high and low threshold approaches to service delivery witnessed in traditional vs. harm reduction models of practice.

In other words if you go to the hospital, from the second you walk up to the building a huge number of demands are put on you. If you go to a Social Security office a huge number of demands are put on you. If you go to prison a huge number of demands are put on you. And in order to guarantee that the people who most need sterile syringes are able to get them, I think low threshold is a better term than what the state uses the term harm reduction to describe. It's low threshold. We put as few demands on people as possible. We do track their exchanges by using an anonymous ID code, for instance, so rather than having people give us their full names and we write them down and record them, we don't record anything except some letters and numbers—letters from their name, and numbers from their birthday, that kind of thing... But I did not as I said know anything about the term harm reduction. And the first thing that I learned was essentially something that I think is very realistic and pragmatic, is to accept that the mere fact that society doesn't like something doesn't mean that it isn't going to happen. And so in the case of, take homosexuality, for instance, it's happened abundantly.

The utility of this approach is the honesty it brings to the nexus of the clinical relationship, which allows for healing, personal development, and growth (Borden, 2009; Mitchell, 1988). Rather than 'the big lie' in which providers and clients each share half-truths about drug use and other less socially controversial, yet common behaviors, harm reductionists

emphasize frank acknowledgement of desire, which helps move the relationship and the treatment forward. Such a model emphasizes client strengths, rather than viewing people as difficulties or the totalities of their problems (Saleeby, 1996). Kate Barnhart (personal communication, January 15, 2006) talks about the kinds of social capital that grow from building relationships in such a manner.

[Y]ou have to find it in yourself to be able to connect with everybody on a human level—like every single person. You can't just see somebody as a bundle of his or her problems. And it's OK to share human moments with them, like joke or laugh. I often will make jokes, like puns and stuff, and it just creates a relationship that then I can use. It's a sense of capital, like relationship capital. I'm gaining points with you that then I can spend when I need to tell you something difficult, like, I really think you need to be in rehab.

Housing Works' Keith Cylar (Shepard, 2002) used to say, if you worked with someone long enough, met them where they were at long enough, then eventually the client starts to trust you, and they will work with you a little bit. Kate Barnhart (personal communication, 1, 15, 2006) ruminates about this work:

It's a very long process. I always say it's like planting a seed and wait and wait and wait, and you can't see the process of seeds going through germinating underground, and you don't know if they're ever going to come up, and then when they come up and they're little plants, there's so many threats to them and everything, but eventually you might get a tree.

Part of cultivating such development involves recognizing that people grow in relationship with others, with community. Keith Cylar and Charles King conceived their program

as a “healing community.” Such a community involves a different kind of model of care. Charles King (personal communication, August 15, 2005) elaborates:

It goes back to when I was working with abused children when I ran a foster home. And it was an emergency reception center so you were constantly getting in new children, and the couple who ran it before me kept emphasizing to me that if I wanted to survive that kind of work, I would have to be careful not to get close to any of the kids. And I knew that wasn't going to work. I made a commitment that I was going to fall in love with every single child and grieve every single child when they took it away. And that that was the only way that you could actually function in an environment that was filled with that much pain.

In the years since ACT UP's civil disobedience to force the legalization of the practice, programs have grown and harm reduction has come to be recognized as a successful public health intervention that does not increase drug use (Des Jarlais et al., 1996). HIV affected 60% of injection drug users in New York in 1990. As of 2001, that rate was down to 10%, according to the New York Department of Health (as cited in Clear, 2009).

Despite this data, the ban on federal funding for syringe exchange programs continues. This ban continues to restrict effective HIV prevention. Grove (2007) describes its impacts.

Although the most prominent form of - prominent but controversial - form of harm reduction is syringe exchange, which is a form of harm reduction for drug users where, rather than having them deal with such a dire scarcity of syringes that they wind up sharing each other's and spreading blood-borne diseases, we make sure, or try to make sure, that they have sterile syringes of their own and don't use each other's, or reuse each other's. And so that is very controversial. There are a lot of people who think that drug

users ought to have AIDS, but I think there's another form of harm reduction that needs to be done is to educate the public as to exactly what that means. . . . But instead of stopping people from using drugs, or making syringes illegal—stopping people from injecting—what it's done is generate an epidemic. And yet government policy is so rigid, and of course so much money flows into law enforcement, and so much money flows into the prison system, and so much money flows into all these things that no one actually wants to change the laws that support this whole idiotic war on drugs simply because it's created a catastrophe in communities of color.

Compound this with the 'Mexico City Rule' or global gag rule, which prohibited effective family planning under the Bush administration. Yet, examples abound of comprehensive approaches, including frank discourse on sexuality, family planning, and harm reduction, that are far more effective than abstinence-only approaches (Collins, Alagiri, & Summers, 2002). Countries around the world, most significantly Brazil, have helped demonstrate this point.

### **Summary**

With the election of Barack Obama and increasing evidence, the environment is shifting from a criminalization paradigm back toward that of prevention. Thanks to a hip-hop movement and tenacious organizing, the Rockefeller Drug laws were repealed in New York in 2009. In January, 2009, Rep. Jose Serrano of the Bronx introduced the HR 179 - the Community AIDS and Hepatitis Prevention Act of 2009 - to Congress, with the aim of lifting the ban on syringe exchange programs (Clear, 2009 ) which was successful (Pelofsky, 2009). Meanwhile, harm reduction has established itself as a best practice in community organization, social services, and approaches to public health.

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## CHAPTER 8

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### WOMEN'S BEAN PROJECT: FROM A HILL OF BEANS TO A PRODUCTIVE LIFE

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#### Abstract

The Women's Bean Project (WBP) is an excellent example of the success of breaking the cycle of poverty for unemployed inner city women and supporting their dreams of a productive life through the application of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs combine the passion for a mission that is found in the nonprofit sector with strategies used by the for-profit sector. Operating as a social enterprise, the WBP hires women with a history of chronic poverty to work in the business and, in the process, teaches job readiness and life skills. This article takes an in depth look at the Women's Bean Project, social entrepreneurs, and the women that the WBP serves.

*“The Women’s Bean Project does not hire women to make and sell bean products. We make and sell bean products to hire women”* (Women’s Bean Project, 2007).

The Women’s Bean Project (WBP) is an excellent example of the success of social entrepreneurship, in the form of a social enterprise, at breaking the cycle of poverty for unemployed inner city women and supporting their dreams of a productive life. While a definition for social entrepreneurship remains elusive, in its essence, it is the work to create positive social change via entrepreneurial strategies. In other words, efforts to end human suffering or social injustice are supported by means and methods that have historically been associated with the world of entrepreneurship. Within this context, a social enterprise is the organizational structure that is often the engine of social entrepreneurship. A social enterprise has the flexibility to operate as a for-profit or not-for-profit entity, but, either way, the mission to create social good remains as the core of the work.

The mission at the heart of WBP is “to change women’s lives by providing stepping stones to self-sufficiency through social enterprise” (Women’s Bean Project, 2007). WBP achieves this mission by operating as a nonprofit business that sells a variety of products (mostly bean soups) both locally and nationally. Located in Denver, Colorado, WBP combines a human service program with sound business practices. Women with a history of chronic poverty are hired to work in the business and, in the process, learn job readiness and life skills. These women “have histories of poverty and unemployment; they lack hope and self-confidence; most do not have a GED or high school diploma; most are single mothers and have been on public assistance; and many are recovering from experiences with substance abuse and incarceration” (Women’s Bean Project, 2007). The women employed by WBP face multiple obstacles to accessing jobs with career potential. Chronic unemployment keeps women in a cycle of poverty that is difficult

to break, particularly in times of national economic recession. Government aid programs like Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) and food stamps, although helpful, do little to support changes in life style, self-perception, and ability to function in an employable manner. As a social enterprise, WBP is able to provide transitional employment in a supportive community for hard-to-employ women in order to encourage a move from chronic unemployment to self-sufficiency.

The structure of WBP as a social enterprise supports the mission of the agency in two critical ways. First, the population served by WBP receives intensive, multi-faceted team support and engagement in order to progress from a place of low self-esteem and poverty to a place of confidence and work readiness that lays the groundwork for a productive life. Although there are a number of human services programs designed to empower women and others designed to serve hard-to-employ populations, few have the capacity to provide the level of contact, coaching, support, and accountability of this model. WBP is able to offer this degree of supportive services by hiring women to work in the business aspect of the agency. Second, the social enterprise status of the agency diversifies the income stream necessary to maintain the agency and, thus, sustains the work to achieve the mission. As a social enterprise, WBP is able not only to provide employment to the women they serve but also to meet over 60% of agency budgetary needs through the sale of products. Unlike more traditional nonprofits, WBP is less reliant on grants and donations in order to operate their programs. In 2008, while many nonprofit agencies were struggling to make ends meet, WBP had its best year of sales to date and was able to increase its capacity to serve more women.

The unique nature of the agency allows WBP to hire and pay women so that they are able to meet basic short-term needs while they learn life skills, receive hands-on training in job

readiness, and participate in skills building in a variety of career and life arenas. As such, it is a model for human service delivery that deserves further exploration. The history, structure, and mission of WBP can be framed in the context of the growing body of literature about social entrepreneurship and the nature of a social enterprise as well as in literature relating to hard-to-employ populations. An overview of the agency with perspectives gleaned from interviews with staff, program participants, and board members offers a picture of the reach and success of the agency. As a social enterprise with a mission and structure that effectively support women to move from chronic unemployment to productive engagement with the workforce, the agency represents a best practice in the field of human services. An exploration of this model may serve to encourage educators and practitioners in the field to explore the possibilities presented by the innovative ideas and strategies that are embodied in social entrepreneurship.

### **Social Entrepreneurship and the Social Entrepreneur**

Jossy Eyre, founder of WBP, was on the forefront of a movement that is now receiving widespread attention in the academic world, the nonprofit sector, and, more recently, mainstream society. Since the 1990s, over 200 colleges and universities have started offering course-work in social entrepreneurship and creating centers to study this phenomenon. Books like *Enterprising Nonprofits: A Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurs* (Dees, Emerson, & Economy, 2001) provide conceptual and practical tools for members of the nonprofit sector interested in applying entrepreneurial strategies to their work. Social entrepreneurship received widespread global attention when Wangari Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize for the Green Belt movement in 2004 and was followed by Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank in 2006 (Bornstein, 2007; Yunus, 2007a).

The literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise is still in its nascent stages.

While the phenomenon may not be new, the concept itself is relatively recent. J. Gregory Dees (2007), founding faculty director of the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University, explains that “the concept of ‘social entrepreneurship’ emerged in the 1980s from the work of Bill Drayton at Ashoka, funding social innovators around the world, and Ed Skloot at New Ventures, helping nonprofits explore new sources of income” (p. 24). In an effort to increase public awareness of and support for this phenomenon, some of the literature has focused on telling the stories of specific social entrepreneurs. For example, *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* by David Bornstein (2007) features the work of Bill Drayton and Ashoka, a foundation developed by Drayton to find and fund social entrepreneurs across the globe whose work creates change at local and national levels. The book shares the stories of success of social entrepreneurs whose work was recognized and funded by Ashoka. Other books highlight the stories of Wangari Maathai and Muhammad Yunus while the PBS series, *The New Heroes* (Davis, 2005), hosted by Robert Redford, portrays the commitment and passion of a number of less well-known social entrepreneurs.

The academic literature focused on the field of social entrepreneurship is attempting to frame theoretical models to apply to this growing sector of the economy, with an emphasis on defining terms, delineating the qualities of a social entrepreneur, and outlining the distinctions between both traditional nonprofits and traditional entrepreneurial ventures and the new paradigm of the social enterprise. As of yet, there is not one clear and widely accepted definition for the phenomenon called social entrepreneurship but rather a set of characteristics that help to delineate work in the field and qualities that can be applied to individual social entrepreneurs. In essence, social entrepreneurs apply entrepreneurial skills and strategies to social issues in order to create positive social change. The social entrepreneur combines the passion for a mission that

is found in the nonprofit sector with strategies used by the for-profit sector. As Dees, Emerson, and Economy (2001) explain, “Entrepreneurs are innovative, opportunity-oriented, resourceful, value-creating change agents” (p. 4). Social entrepreneurs place social change and the desire to improve social conditions at the heart of their entrepreneurial efforts.

The current attempt to define and describe social entrepreneurship varies in scale as well as strategy. Drayton, founder of Ashoka, is focused on individuals (or groups) who make a change beyond the local level. While an individual may start his/her work on a small scale, Drayton sees a social entrepreneur as an individual who ultimately makes an impact on a national or even global scale. His premise is that innovative ideas alone do not create social progress; it takes innovative individuals to champion ideas in a way that impacts society and changes the status quo for the better. He first began the work to develop Ashoka (which has now funded over 2000 social entrepreneurs in 70 countries) in the late 1970s. Ashoka, as a foundation, seeks out individuals who are developing ideas that can be replicated in order to have large-scale impact. Drayton views individuals like Florence Nightingale, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi as the quintessential social entrepreneurs (Bornstein, 2007). J. Gregory Dees (2001), in what is now considered a seminal article on social entrepreneurship, developed five factors embodied by social entrepreneurs. They are “adopting a mission to create and sustain social value; recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission; engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning; acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand; and, exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created” (p. 4). Neither Drayton nor Dees mention the concept of seeking earned income in the specific qualities they assign to social entrepreneurs. Other authors, such as Jerr Boschee (1998, 2006), focus less on the scale of the

impact, but include the concept of earned income at the core of an understanding of social entrepreneurship.

Despite their differences, all authors agree that the focus of social entrepreneurship is on solving social problems. Jeffrey Skoll (2006), eBay's first president and founder of the Skoll Foundation, believes that "social entrepreneurs are...the practical dreamers who have the talent and the skill and the vision to solve the problems, to change the world for the better" (p. v). The emphasis of much of the work of social entrepreneurs is on alleviating human suffering and meeting human needs. Roger Martin and Sally Osberg (2007), both with the Skoll Foundation, assert that:

the social entrepreneur should be understood as someone who targets an unfortunate but stable equilibrium that causes the neglect, marginalization, or suffering of a segment of humanity; who brings to bear on this situation his or her inspiration, direct action, creativity, courage, and fortitude; and who aims for and ultimately affects the establishment of a new stable equilibrium that secures permanent benefit for the targeted group and society at large. (p. 39)

While ending human suffering is the goal of the work, the means to achieve that end highlight the creativity of the entrepreneurial spirit. In recent years, there has been a boom in organizations that fund social entrepreneurs and structures that support social entrepreneurship. The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, which was founded in 1999, and the Skoll Foundation, which began funding social entrepreneurial efforts in 2003, are among the most prominent (Bornstein, 2007; Yunus, 2007b).

## **The Social Enterprise**

The social enterprise is often, but not always, the vehicle of the social entrepreneur. A social enterprise is an organization, either for-profit or not-for-profit, that combines a social mission with entrepreneurial activities. Sutia Alter (2006), a Visiting Fellow at the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, explains that:

the hallmark of social entrepreneurship is its ability to combine social interests with business practices to effect social change. Its hybrid world--part business-part social--has spawned a new breed of practitioner, the social entrepreneur, as well as a new brand of organization, the revenue earning social enterprise. (p. 205)

This new hybrid entity blends social goals with commercial means (Dees et al., 2001, p. 9). Ultimately, a social enterprise has a social mission at its core; it is an organization with revenue generating activities designed to support the social mission. While businesses and corporations that donate a certain percentage of their profit to social causes are commendable, they are not the same thing as a social enterprise. For some social enterprises, like WBP, the revenue generating activity directly relates to and supports the implementation of the mission. Other nonprofits participate in business ventures that are not specifically tied to the mission, beyond making profit which can then be applied to the mission. The sale of Girl Scout cookies is an example of a business venture that raises funds to support a mission; however, teaching girls to sell cookies is not the core mission of the Girl Scouts.

The hybrid nature of a social enterprise comes with benefits as well as challenges. Board members and staff must have a sense of both worlds and skills and knowledge that support both the mission and the ability to generate revenue. Jerr Boschee, a consultant in the field of social enterprise, works to inform board members of nonprofit social enterprises and agencies

considering earned income opportunities about the unique nature of the social enterprise. As Boschee (1998) explains in *Merging Mission and Money* these agencies “are driven by a double bottom line, a mixture of both ‘mission’ and ‘money’” (p. 3). These hybrid organizations are a growing sector of the economy at large and of the delivery of human services in particular. The unique structure of the social enterprise is proving to be particularly effective in serving hard-to-employ populations.

### **The Hard-to-Employ**

Literature on hard-to-employ populations discusses the issues that impact the employability of an individual or a group and provides descriptions of programs focused on supporting hard-to-employ populations. There are a number of factors that impact the employability of an individual. Often, hard-to-employ individuals were raised in families that received welfare or some form of government assistance. Many are single mothers. Many suffer from poor physical and/or mental health (depression rates are often high in this population) and have limited options for treatment or assistance. Hard-to-employ individuals often have some form of learning disability, which has not always been diagnosed. Lack of education and little to no work experience create difficulties in obtaining work (Zedlewski, Holcomb, & Loprest, 2007). Most of the hard-to-employ population has not received a high school diploma or a GED. Substance abuse, previous criminal convictions (especially felony convictions), and unstable housing compound other obstacles to employment (Zedlewski et al., 2007; Pavetti, 2002). Colorado is one of the few states that do not fund treatment for substance abuse, making substance addiction an even more difficult barrier for Colorado residents to overcome (The Lewin Group, Farrell, & Elkin, 2006). Furthermore, if a single mother has an infant or child with a disability or chronic health issues, her ability to consistently show up to work is negatively

impacted. LaDonna Pavetti (2002), a nationally recognized expert in welfare policy research, explains that “the potential obstacles [to employment] vary, but generally fall into three broad categories: personal and family challenges (including substance abuse, mental or physical health problems, domestic violence, and learning disabilities); human capital deficits (including limited work experience and low levels of education); and logistical obstacles (including transportation and child care)” (p. 118).

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, which transformed welfare and placed an emphasis on getting mothers back to work, by limiting the time a family can receive aid and setting work requirements for recipients, had a direct impact on hard-to-employ women. “Officially, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) approaches to moving individuals to work are (1) ‘human capital development’ and (2) ‘labor force attachment’” (Hildebrandt and Stevens, 2009, p. 794). “Labor force attachment” focuses on getting individuals into the labor market quickly no matter what the level of preparation for employment or the wage earned. “Human capital development” can include a range of strategies with an emphasis on developing human capacity via education. The reality is that programs focused on human capital development are far more expensive and labor intensive than programs that simply require individuals to go back to work, and, thus, some states have chosen to utilize labor force attachment as their major or only strategy for decreasing the welfare rolls. With the radical decline in individuals on the welfare rolls since 1996 (a 59% decline in Colorado), some states and nonprofit agencies have begun to see the need to support hard-to-employ populations, particularly given the impact of PRWORA.

Programs specifically designed to help the hard-to-employ find and maintain employment vary from intensive case management to job preparedness training to actual employment in a

social enterprise setting. There is currently a lack of research clarifying what type of programs work best and what elements of those programs are most effective in serving these populations. However, there are some common themes and lessons learned from research on existing programs. Programs serving the hard-to-employ tend to emphasize “creating a positive context, coordination of services, recognizing the need for more up-front services, and staff training” (Dion, Derr, Anderson, & Pavetti, 1999). Clients are approached from a strengths-based perspective, and the programs often focus on enhancing client self-esteem and confidence. Given that this population tends to have multiple needs, collaboration between and among state-funded programs and nonprofits is vital to helping hard-to-employ individuals move towards self-sufficiency. WBP, a program and model developed prior to PRWORA, combines most, if not all, of the best practices currently featured in the literature on programs serving the hard-to-employ.

### **History of WBP**

In 1989, Jossy Eyre responded to a social problem with a business solution. The problem she saw was the difficulty for homeless women to earn money and change their life circumstances. The solution was creating a nonprofit business to employ women to develop and sell bean soups. In doing so, Eyre acted as a social entrepreneur and founded a social enterprise now known as the Women’s Bean Project. The idea came to Eyre while she was working as a volunteer social worker for a Denver-based day shelter for homeless women and their children. She realized that while the shelter provided important services, the program did not provide women the tools to move out of poverty and homelessness. In an interview with PBS, Eyre described the women she met at the shelter: “What I saw there were many, many, many women who were not part of the mainstream population. They appeared very depressed...they had absolutely no way of being self-sufficient” (Michels, 2008).

Eyre saw a problem and, like other social entrepreneurs, saw an opportunity to make a change. Eyre responded to a specific human need with an entrepreneurial strategy. At the time, many of her friends were interested in healthy eating, so she decided to develop and sell a product that would appeal to health conscience individuals. Eyre spent \$500 of her own money to buy beans and hired two homeless women to make and sell bean soups. In that first year, they sold \$6100 worth of bean soups. WBP was incorporated in 1989 and, since that time, has been working to move women who have been chronically unemployed into job readiness. What is unique about Eyre is that rather than seeing hopelessness in the situation, she created opportunity. Similar to other social entrepreneurs, a lack of resources did not limit her vision of what was possible to achieve.

### **Client Profile**

WBP hires a population of women who face multiple obstacles to employment and, as such, have been defined in the literature as hard-to-employ. Program participants are employed for up to a year, resulting in an ever-changing atmosphere and client population. Even so, there is relative consistency in the demographic profile of the program participants, which tends to be 40% African American, 40% Hispanic, and 20% Caucasian. Nearly all clients (90%) have children, though not all have custody of their children. The average age is 40. Most (60% to 90%) do not possess a high school degree or GED. Typically, the women hired by WBP have had an inconsistent employment record, and 80% to 90% have felony convictions related to substance abuse. Often, the women have not held a job for more than a year at a time. Many of the women grew up in poverty, and their barriers to work include the lack of positive employment role models. Simply put, the population employed by the WBP does not possess the

skills required to find a job and maintain employment. These are women who have few or no other options available to them (Ryan, personal communication, May 18, 2009).

### **Current Program and Services**

The primary focus of the program has always been supporting job readiness and employability for hard-to-employ women. According to the Deputy Director, Bob Macdonald, WBP utilizes the initial hiring process to look for women who are “truly serious about changing the trajectory of their lives and willing to put in the effort” (personal communication, June 19, 2009). Nonetheless, job readiness training is not enough to effectively prepare women who have been chronically unemployed to meet the challenges of the work world. As one program participant said, “It’s hard to go to work when you have no home to go to at the end of the day” (personal communication, June 24, 2009). Thus, the program looks at the overall life situation and needs of each program participant and offers three core services: (a) meeting basic needs and managing obstacles to employment, (b) developing life skills, and (c) fundamental job readiness training.

Once a woman is hired by WBP, she is assessed for immediate needs as well as potential obstacles to employment such as lack of housing, childcare, and transportation. Staff work with the program participant to develop a comprehensive case plan focused on meeting those basic needs which may include health and dental care, personal counseling, and other related services. While WBP does not provide any of these services, they partner with other agencies in the Denver area to assist women to find housing and meet their other needs. Ultimately, the WBP is working to “help women help themselves,” says Macdonald (personal communication, June 19, 2009).

After meeting basic needs, the focus shifts to helping women develop life skills such as basic financial know-how, computer skills, goal setting, planning, problem solving, and communication. While program participants are paid for a 40-hour work week, they only spend 60% and 70% of their time working on the production line to support the business aspect of the agency. The rest of the participants' time is spent in life skills classes, attending appointments to arrange for housing and other basic needs, and participating in other educational opportunities such as GED classes. Women are paid to learn the skills they will need to maintain long-term employment. In a given year, the women participate in up to 250 unique life skills classes taught by community experts who volunteer their time. The classes are mandatory and take place during work hours, requiring the production lines to be temporarily shut down on a regular basis, because the commitment to teaching women life skills is an agency priority.

The job readiness training happens in the context of the workplace. Because the agency is a social enterprise, it provides a transitional employment opportunity. Program participants are involved in all aspects of creating, selling, and shipping a variety of bean and bean-related products. These women arrive at WBP lacking a basic understanding of what it takes to gain and maintain employment. Macdonald explains, "We're about teaching them to come to work" (personal communication, June 19, 2009). Learning to show up to work, be punctual, and act appropriately is done in the context of intensive support and intervention from staff as well as a peer group that can both celebrate each other's successes and confront each other about problems. In addition to learning how to write a resume and other job preparedness skills, the women participate in activities such as mock interviews with local employers. The program participants are able to experience intensive support services and educational opportunities while earning the income necessary to support themselves and their families.

## **Morning Meetings**

WBP holds morning meetings with all staff and program participants five days a week, a policy which is considered by staff to be a best practice of the program. These meetings provide an opportunity to check in with each other, make announcements, discuss production plans, and communicate about other issues. On Monday mornings, everyone sets goals for the week. All staff members, including the CEO, participate in goal-setting with program participants. Everyone must set both short- and long-term goals, which can range in scope from setting up a dentist appointment to working towards a GED.

On Friday morning, everyone meets to check in on each other's goals. The Friday meeting is a time to celebrate successes. One person is awarded the "You Rock" rock (literally a rock with the words "you rock" painted on it) by the person who received the rock the previous week. This meeting also allows for subtle peer pressure and a sense of accountability to the group. Many of the women have never set goals or have even known what a goal was prior to employment at WBP. The meetings not only teach goal setting and achievement, but also support building program participant's self-esteem and self-confidence, which is a critical element for individual success. One program participant told us that she achieved all the long-range goals she set for herself in the weekly goal setting process, including completing her rehabilitation program, getting her own apartment, and getting her driver's license re-instated. At the time of the interview, she had been accepted into a local community college and would begin classes while still employed at WBP.

## **Outcomes**

WBP has two goals for the program participants: (1) graduate with basic workplace competencies, and (2) be placed in an entry-level job with career potential. The agency did not

place an emphasis on data collection until recently; therefore, outcome data is limited to the last 3 to 6 years. Since 2006, the graduation rate for the program has ranged from approximately 50% to 60% of the women who enter the program. The women who do not graduate from the program typically have been fired based on poor attendance. These graduation rates match or exceed other programs focused on the hard-to-employ. Of the women who graduate, the job placement rate has varied from 40% in 2009 (in part due to the current state of the economy and issues specific to the group of program participants) to 80% in 2006. WBP began gathering follow up data on program participants at 6 and 12 months three years ago. Unfortunately, the data has not yet been compiled into a report or analyzed due to a gap in staffing which has only recently been filled.

A defined set of job readiness competencies and a process for measuring those competencies are used to determine graduation from the program. WBP uses assessment tools that were designed by independent professionals to measure performance. The women complete pre- and post-self-assessment instruments upon employment and shortly prior to completion of employment. Every 60 days, program participants undergo an evaluation process. Promotions and bonuses are determined by positive evaluations. A current program participant told us that the evaluation process supported her self-esteem by verifying in a formal process the quality of her work.

Using a system titled ROMA (Results Oriented Management and Accountability), the agency went through a structured process to formally focus on assessment and define parameters for success. An initial study of data from the years 2005 and 2006 showed a sharp increase in the percentage of women who graduated from the program (from 25% to 47%). Qualitative data show that “as compared to prior years, the women enrolled have had improved attitudes and

demonstrated that they have a better chance to succeed” (Haynes, Ryan, & Macdonald, 2007, p. 42). Since 2005, data on graduation and job placement continues to show improvement.

What stands out as the heart of the program is the impact on the women’s sense of self-worth and self-confidence. When Eyre began working with women at the shelter, she realized that the women lacked confidence. “I think the biggest hurdle was the sense of low self-esteem, no sense of being able to do anything really worthwhile” (Michels, 2008). Tamra Ryan, CEO of WBP, is clear that the focus remains true to Eyre’s initial assessment of the need to support a change in program participants’ sense of self. “Our purpose is to create a culture of confidence that lasts for generations” (personal communication, May 18, 2009). Current and past program participants often cite self-confidence when asked what they gained or learned from their experience at WBP. In interviews with program participants conducted by the authors as well as in previous interviews conducted by staff, self-esteem was a central theme of the women’s comments. The following statements exemplify the empowerment experienced by program participants:

“I’m worth giving a chance.”

“You [WBP] gave me the opportunity to remember my worth.”

“I now feel more confident about what I have to offer.”

“I have so much confidence in myself now. My mom told me she is proud of me. It made me feel accepted, and I feel good about myself for once.”

The women who are successful in the program gain a sense that they are worthwhile individuals. Lisa Alexander, a long time board member, told us that “I was hooked after my first visit to the Women’s Bean Project. The first thing you see when you walk in the door is women working—they are working to produce a tangible product and working to change their lives

simultaneously. A sense of accomplishment can go a long way to rebuilding someone's self-esteem" (personal communication, June 25, 2009).

The success in instilling a sense of self-worth is due in part to a climate of respect created by the staff and board. Program participants used phrases like "caring environment" and "they treat us as individuals." They do not feel judged by the staff. In fact, they gain a sense that "My past is not who I am." In the eyes of program participants, the staff creates a caring, non-judgmental space to support women's future success. "They don't care about where you have been. They care about where you are going." Staff members encourage program participants to value their own self-worth and focus on their future rather than regretting the past.

Program participants also learn how to function in the world and at work. These are women who, through addiction and other life circumstances, had not gained a sense of how to function effectively in a job or in daily life. Most of the program participants lacked education and computer skills. Their difficulty with problem-solving and communication skills created obstacles to success in a work environment. Participants might not have ever set a goal prior to coming to WBP. They lived life from day to day, giving little thought to their long-range hopes and dreams. Program participants repeatedly said that, through their experience at WBP, they learned how to "do" life. A program participant told us that her "whole attitude about life has changed." Prior to being hired by WBP, she had been "flushing my life away." She started drinking at age 14 and ultimately ended up in jail. She sees what WBP offers her as a "second chance" and a "brand new start." Now in her early thirties and working at WBP, she is "the happiest I've ever been in my whole life."

The women see the program as a bridge to the next step in their journeys and a transition from where they were back to society. When asked what they would say to a new program

participant, repeatedly the women said, “to take advantage of everything they [WBP] have to offer.” The program participants emphasized that the women, not the agency, need to make the best of their lives and make an effort to change, but that the agency would help make it possible for them to succeed. They realized that WBP could not “fix” their lives, but could provide the support and structure to help them help themselves. One said, “it [WBP] helped me to be accountable.” A former program participant summed it up by saying “If you take all the advantages [offered by WBP], you will succeed.”

### **Weathering a Financial Storm**

In 2001 and 2002, WBP faced a major financial crisis that almost forced the organization to close its doors. The board responded by deciding to make major staffing changes as well as recruit new board members. The financial problems may have stemmed from the challenges presented by the hybrid nature of a social enterprise. As Boschee (2006) explains, “so often, NGOs discover (too late) that their entrepreneurial efforts have been doomed simply because they are being led by people with the wrong types of skills” (p. 362). Tamra Ryan was hired as the executive director and CEO. Ms. Ryan came to WBP with experience in the corporate world (marketing and sales) and brought a business savvy that the agency had been lacking up to that point in its development.

In addition to changes in staffing, one crucial organizational shift was the creation of a formal development program. Until 2004, there had been almost no records kept of donors or donations except for a list of approximately 100 people and records totaling only \$40,000 of donations over the history of the agency. Holly Woodbury was hired as the first Development Director and focused her efforts on increasing the donor base and improving the record keeping protocols and data management. As of 2009, the donor list has increased to 2800 donors who

donate an average of \$100 or more per year, making this a true grassroots organization. Individual donations now bring in about \$300,000 per year. According to Woodbury, the successful growth of individual philanthropy is due to adopting a formal fundraising plan designed by Benevon (personal communication, June 25, 2009). This Washington based company provides training for long-term fundraising stability using a model focused on developing relationships and growing the base of people in the community who know about and support the mission prior to asking for donations. The model is specifically designed for small organizations with no historical fundraising plan or strategy and, as such, was a good fit for WBP.

In addition focusing on the immediate financial crisis, the board realized that the program element of the agency lacked structure. According to Sandra Haynes, who was recruited to the board at that critical juncture because of her mental health knowledge, a goal for the board was to more closely align the programs and services with the mission (personal communication, June 19, 2009). The board's efforts resulted in an agency whose funding has been stabilized, an increase in the number of women who can be served, programs that are clearly defined and aligned with the mission, and a process for assessment of outcomes. The board responded to the financial crisis in decisive and innovative ways that supported the long-term health of the agency.

The stabilization and growth of the organization is, in large part, the result of the board's recognition of the need for defined structure as well as for a director with business acumen. According to Woodbury, the success of the agency is the result of a "great relationship" or "nice marriage" between the leadership of both sides of the house: the agency as a business and the agency as a human services program (personal communication, June 25, 2009). Recent literature

on social entrepreneurship highlights the distinction between entrepreneurial skills and the skills more traditionally associated with nonprofit management. Boschee (2006) explains that, “the culture of a traditional NGO, no matter how innovative, is vastly different from the culture of an entrepreneurial NGO” (p. 367).

While WBP is a nonprofit, it is also a business, and the success of the business directly impacts the agency mission. The CEO and Deputy Director each provide leadership to a different aspect of the agency, but work closely together to support the mission. The Deputy Director, who has an MSW, focuses on the program and direct services for program participants, while the CEO, whose background is in corporate sales and marketing, focuses on the success of the business and the agency as a whole. WBP’s ability to sell products creates the environment necessary to employ and support women. In 2008, while many other nonprofits struggled with loss of funds due to the economic downturn, WBP had its best year of sales to date and, as a result, has been able to create and hire for a new staff position that will support job placement and retention for program graduates.

Historically, the focus of WBP was on job readiness and life skills training, while job placement and job retention services were lacking. To fill this gap, in 2006, the agency decided to begin job placement services. Rather than creating these services, WBP partnered with a local agency that already offered placement services. The results were quite positive, including the first year rate of 80% placement of all program graduates. Unfortunately, with the recent economic downturn, the other agency experienced lay-offs due to budget constraints, which in turn cut services to the program participants at WBP. In response, WBP decided to develop a new position titled Employment Case Manager and has recently hired for that position. The responsibilities of the position will be to develop relationships with local employers willing to

hire graduates of the program, to do employment case management with individual participants to match skills with jobs, and, ultimately, to develop job retention services. This individual will also be responsible for gathering, analyzing, and reporting on job placement and retention data.

### **Growing the Business**

Ultimately, WBP's goal is to grow the business to employ more women. Currently, WBP can employ up to 30 women at a time. This capacity is based on space, staffing, budget, and the number of employees necessary to meet production needs. One way to employ more women is to explore diverse avenues for growth. The social enterprise status allows for experimentation in new ventures. From 1992 to 2005, WBP ran a catering business, which, in the final analysis, proved too complicated and labor intensive to maintain. WBP currently has a grant to explore the potential of developing a project where women would learn how to create and sell bead jewelry. If this project proves successful, it will allow the agency to expand the number of women who can be employed.

Other efforts to grow the business in recent years have focused on increasing outlets for sales. Bean products are now sold at 350 retail outlets (many are small fair trade businesses) in 40 states. The products can be purchased online through the agency website, which was developed in 2001, and two national retail websites, Overstock.com and Amazon.com, which began selling WBP's products in 2005 and 2006 respectively. In 2009, WBP was added to Ebay's World of Good website. In addition, Colorado grocery stores sell a number of the soup products.

Expanding the opportunities for consumers to purchase the products and thereby increasing sales enhances the financial picture for the agency. The recent stabilization and growth of the program has relied on savvy business management and the application of

entrepreneurial strategies to a nonprofit organization. The success of a social enterprise is greatly enhanced when the board and staff are able to fully embrace the unique hybrid nature of such an organization and offer the skills and leadership to meet the demands of the “double bottom line.”

### **A Best Practice in the Field of Human Services**

While social entrepreneurship itself is not necessarily a new phenomenon, it is a concept and a strategy that has recently begun to catch fire in the public imagination for a number of reasons, including the changing financial climate for nonprofit human services agencies.

Boschee (1998) delineates some of the changes the nonprofit sector has experienced over the past thirty years, including, “continuing cuts in public sector support; fluctuations in individual and corporate giving; more nonprofits competing for available funds; many more people in need; pressure from funders and others to merge or downsize; and repeated blows to the reputation of the sector” (p. 2). Since the 1970s, changes in the economy as well as changes in the public attitude about “charity,” combined with the growing need for human services and increasing competition in the nonprofit sector, have created the need for nonprofits to re-conceptualize their roles as well as their funding streams. Dees et al. (2001) support Boschee’s view of the impact of changes on nonprofit organizations when they state that “nonprofit leaders face government funding cuts, rising demands for performance measures by foundations, corporations that want strategic benefits from their philanthropy, new forms of competition from the business sector, and serious questions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of traditional charitable remedies for social problems” (p. 1). These pressures will require a number of changes in the sector. In discussing the future of the nonprofit sector, Woodbury believes that “all nonprofits will need to seek sources of earned income” (personal communication, June 25, 2009).

This shift in the climate for the nonprofit sector has encouraged established nonprofits to explore avenues for earning income, including the option of developing social businesses. WBP was a nonprofit business with a social mission at its very conception, and it is precisely because WBP began as a social enterprise that the agency is a model for best practices in the field of human services. The struggle to create fiscal solvency and sustain the impact of an organization's mission are becoming central issues for the nonprofit sector. Alter (2006) believes that "[f]rom a programme perspective, social enterprise addresses one of the most pressing issues not-for-profit organizations face – how to achieve sustainable impact" (p. 207). Its status as a social enterprise relieves WBP from the pressure to raise 100% of its funding from donors. Earned income, unlike grant funding, is not designated for specific expenses or programs. These funds can be used for operating costs, which are often difficult to fund through grants or individual donors. In addition, the diversification of the income stream allows for greater stability when any one source of funding declines. Because WBP is able to earn 65% to 70% of its total budget through the sale of products, the agency has the ability to be more financially stable in times when grant funding and individual donations drop at the local, state, or national level.

In addition to relieving some of the pressure on agencies to fundraise and decreasing the heavy reliance on donations, the concept of social entrepreneurship is gaining support from the public because it affords human services agencies the ability to offer new types of services in new ways and to move away from functioning as charities. The type of intensive programmatic support and intervention that WBP is able to provide to hard-to-employ women is the result of its social enterprise status. The fact that the WBP is a business (albeit a nonprofit one) permits the agency to hire and pay program participants on a full-time basis, allowing women to earn while

they learn basic job readiness and life skills. As employees, program participants are immersed in a program and a community for 40 hours per week for 6 to 12 months (the average stay is 8.5 months), allowing for support and accountability at a much higher level than programs that simply offer workshops on job readiness or case management. Program participants have the chance to experience a supportive work environment with staff and co-workers who are cognizant of their life issues and personal obstacles, which creates a climate of community and connection and, at the same time, one of accountability.

The programmatic model employed by the WBP is a shift away from a traditional model of charity. The idea of simply giving financial support to families in poverty is one that is no longer widely accepted by the public. The 1996 shift in welfare policy is one result of this change in attitude. Charity has also been questioned by a number of authors and social change activists in terms of effectiveness. As Muhammad Yunus (2007a), founder of the Grameen Bank, states, “Charity is no solution to poverty. Charity only perpetuates poverty by taking the initiative away from the poor” (p. 249). New models focus on providing opportunities and structures that develop human capacity and support self-sufficiency rather than dependency. Haynes, a WBP board member, believes that “work, like play, is a fundamental human endeavor essential for well-being” (personal communication, June 19, 2009). The public no longer wants to fund what it perceives as “hand-outs,” and people living in poverty, including the hard-to-employ, deserve the dignity of participating in productive labor. WBP offers the opportunity for women who have struggled with a lack of life and work skills, poverty, addictions, and felony convictions, the framework to move towards productive, independent lives. Nonetheless, it is up to the women to earn their keep while employed by WBP and to make the changes necessary to move forward once they graduate from the program.

Similar to the Grameen Bank, WBP has focused its efforts on women with the philosophy that changing one woman's life has a positive ripple effect on her children, her family, and the community. Yunus, in his efforts to end poverty in Bangladesh, discovered that focusing on women was the key. The Grameen Bank offers micro-credit (small low-interest loans with no collateral required) to individuals in poverty. Ninety seven percent of the borrowers are women. According to Yunus (2007b), "Observing the actual behavior of people we lent money to, we soon found that giving credit to poor women brings more benefits to a family than giving it to men. When men make money, they tend to spend it on themselves, but when women make money, they bring benefits to the whole family, particularly the children. Thus, lending to women creates a cascading effect that brings social benefits as well as economic benefits to the whole family and ultimately to the entire community" (p. 55). While poverty in Denver has a different face than poverty in Bangladesh, and, thus, the intervention must differ to fit the setting and client population, both agencies share the vision to bring women and children out of poverty by opening doors for women to participate in the market economy.

WBP offers women a chance to change the trajectory of their lives by giving them access to the local economy and the world of work. Haynes points out that "to offer women from backgrounds of chronic poverty the chance to live a productive life is among the worthiest of undertakings. The WBP does just that" (personal communication, May 24, 2009). WBP is a model of the successful use of entrepreneurship in the form of a nonprofit social enterprise to end the cycle of chronic unemployment for women and their families. The field of human services stands to be greatly enriched by engaging with and learning from the movement to use entrepreneurial skills and strategies to create sustainable social change such as an end to poverty. As a bridge between two sectors of the economy that have traditionally been seen as separate

spheres, social entrepreneurship can infuse the field of human services with a sense of creativity and innovation, while bringing heart and compassion to the world of the entrepreneur. The work to end poverty will require diverse and sustainable strategies that empower individuals and families to effectively participate in the economy at large. WBP is one model that deserves attention in the context of the larger global movement to create positive social change and end human suffering using the strengths, skills, strategies, and innovative spirit of the entrepreneurial world.

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## CHAPTER 9

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### EDUCATION ON THE IMMIGRANT TRAIL: BORDERLANDS OF HUMAN SERVICE

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#### Abstract

Desert conditions have been a recipe for thousands of deaths in southern Arizona in recent years. The author focuses on the attempt by humanitarian groups to address the human rights and physical needs of the men, women, and children who cross the border in search of a better life. In particular, the group No More Deaths is profiled, along with its philosophy of civil initiative: the duty of citizens to take action to defend human rights when their own governments refuse to do so. The scale of the human tragedy on the border, impacting hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, carries implications for the human services, and opportunities for human services workers.

All day I face the barren waste without the taste of water

Cool, clear, water (Marty Robbins, 1959)

It was just a few hours after sunrise in the Sonora Desert, but the day was already promising to be a hot one. Bernardo, Jessica and I had been following the migrant trail along a dry watercourse for about an hour, climbing steadily up into the hills, searching for any signs of Fernando. My two companions had been here the previous afternoon, but we wanted to go further now, back to the top of the pass described to us by Jose, another migrant, to the spot where Fernando had been left behind by his guide. Bernardo, a recently retired policeman, had taken down the explicit details of the terrain and description of Fernando and what he was wearing: a 62-year-old man, balding with some white hair, black shirt, blue jeans, black backpack. We reached the top of the pass, and looked south across a long valley to the mountains on the Mexican border, perhaps seven miles away. Most border crossers would have used up much of their water supply by the time they reached this pass, and they would still have two to four days of walking in the desert in front of them. Lying on the ground, amidst the jumble of empty bottles and bits of cast-off clothing, was a black backpack in good condition. Inside were the usual folded black garbage bag and a toothbrush—nothing more. We called out:

“Fernando! Jose nos mando! Tenemos agua, y comida, y medicina. Si necesitas algo, nos avise!” (Fernando! Jose sent us! We have water, food, and medicine. If you need anything, let us know!)

There was no answer, save the wind whistling through the rocks.

Fernando may have met up with another group and made his way out of the desert. He may have been picked up by the border patrol and taken back to Mexico. Or the desert may have claimed him, leaving behind his bones like thousands of others who have attempted this crossing

in recent years. As volunteers with the humanitarian group No More Deaths, we would probably never know. We only knew that we needed to put out more water along the trails, in the hopes that those who were lost would find them.

This essay describes the current humanitarian response to the tremendous increase in undocumented immigration through the Sonora Desert in Arizona. It discusses changes in immigration policy and enforcement in recent years, specifically Operation Gatekeeper and its aftermath, to provide a background as to why immigrants no longer cross at places such as Juarez and instead choose a dangerous desert crossing. Next, the essay discusses the development and practice of the concept of civil initiative (the responsibility to assist victims of human rights violations when the government is the violator) and applies the concept to the work of organizations such as No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes. The essay presents various aspects of humanitarian work, from placing water along trails, to providing medical assistance and documenting abuses at border stations for returned migrants. Finally, the essay makes recommendations for human services providers who would like to use their skills in the difficult but rewarding terrain of the border region.

### **Border History from 1846 to the Present**

People have lived in the U.S.-Mexican border region for thousands of years. Many native peoples, such as the Tohono O'odham, still inhabit both sides of the border in the Sonora Desert region. Today's security fences, high-tech watchtowers, and fleets of border patrol vehicles are the latest physical manifestation of a political boundary established in 1848. In that year, through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the conclusion of a war against Mexico, the United States greatly expanded its western territory. Together with the Gadsden Treaty of 1853, this established the current boundary between the United States and Mexico. Through these treaties,

over 100,000 Mexican citizens found themselves within the boundaries of the United States. Over time, many other Mexicans journeyed north to the United States to find work in the growing economy of places such as California and Arizona.

Beginning in 1929, economic depression, coupled with anti-Mexican hysteria, resulted in hundreds of thousands of Mexicans, some of whom were actually American citizens, being forcibly deported. During and after World War II, the Bracero Program brought thousands of Mexican guest workers to the United States. In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act allowed for 3 million undocumented immigrants to regularize their status and pursue citizenship, while also expanding the Border Patrol, an organization that had its origins in the Texas Rangers. In 1994, shortly after the passage of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by the United States, Mexico, and Canada, the United States began Operation Gatekeeper, which, along with Operation Hold-the-Line, effectively shut down popular border crossing points in California and Texas. As the 1990s came to a close, and as undocumented immigration increased due to a worsening economic situation in much of Mexico, the border was increasingly sealed off by fences and patrolled by armed agents of the Border Patrol (Nevins, 2002).

The main gap in the border remained in southern Arizona, where the Sonora Desert provided what many thought would be a natural barrier to undocumented immigration. Yet, despite the desert and the mountains and the high cost of the journey (up to \$3,000 per person for the crossing), hundreds of thousands of Mexicans, Central Americans, and others continue to enter the United States each year through this dangerous land.

### **Humanitarian Aid in the Desert**

Millions of Mexicans, Central Americans, and others have attempted to cross into the United States through increasingly hostile terrain in the last decade (Scharf, 2006; Urrea, 2004).

As deaths in the desert have grown, various humanitarian organizations have stepped in to provide water, food, and medical assistance to migrants who are in distress. The organizations include Humane Borders, the Samaritans, and No More Deaths. Each organizations puts out water at certain spots along the migrant trails. No More Deaths also maintains a desert camp during the summer months, and sends out foot patrols to walk the trails and maintain remote water drops. The organization also helps maintain aid stations at border crossing points in Nogales and Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico. For the past three summers Don Hones has volunteered with No More Deaths and the following description draws from his personal experience.

### **Civil Initiative**

On arrival in Tucson, volunteers with No More Deaths attend an orientation where they learn about border history, legal issues, and medical issues they are likely to encounter in the desert, and the organizing principle of No More Deaths, *civil initiative*. Civil initiative is a concept that has grown out of the humanitarian response, first to the influx of refugees from Latin America in the 1980s, and now to the crisis posed by hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children crossing through dangerous desert terrain in order to get into the United States. Civil initiative differs from civil disobedience in that, rather than consciously breaking a law that is morally wrong, those engaged in civil initiative consciously seek to protect the human rights of immigrants when the government has violated their rights (No More Deaths, 2009). No More Deaths and affiliated organizations seek to provide humanitarian aid in settings where the government fails to do so, as well as to raise public awareness regarding the tragic and often abusive realities facing immigrants in the border region (Bhimji, 2009; Michalowski, 2007; Scharf, 2006).

No More Deaths relies on volunteers to provide on-site humanitarian aid at border stations where immigrants are returned to Mexico; to maintain a desert camp with food, water, and medical supplies; and to do daily patrols along migrant trails, setting out gallon jugs of water at established sites and looking for any migrants who may be in distress. Each of these sites is ideal for human services providers, especially those with some medical training or some fluency in the Spanish language.

### **Bird Camp, Arivaca, Arizona**

Located about one-half hour from the town of Arivaca, Arizona, Bird Camp sits close to some established migrant trails which follow routes from Sasabe, on the border, to Highway 19 and Tucson. Volunteers typically go on a morning and afternoon patrol each day. Trucks are loaded with water, and members of each patrol bring a GPS, a cell phone, maps of the area, and a medical kit. Each patrol member carries extra water and food packets for any migrants he/she may encounter. Participants must be physically fit, and capable of walking 8-10 miles daily in temperatures that can reach 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The camp is equipped with a medical tent and supplies, in order to provide first aid to migrants. Medical conditions seen at the camp typically range from large blisters on feet, to insect and animal bites, to diarrhea, dehydration, and heat exhaustion.

### **Nogales/Agua Prieta/Naco, Sonora Aid Stations**

When the Border Patrol picks up migrants, they are held for perhaps 24 hours, and then turned over to Wackenhut, a private bus service that transports the migrants to border crossings at places such as Nogales, Agua Prieta, and Naco. During peak season, crossings such as that at Nogales might see 3,000 returning migrants in a day. Migrants must walk back across the border, often without having been given much food and water since their arrests, and typically with

untreated medical needs. No More Deaths, the Mexican Red Cross, and other Mexican support groups have established aid stations at these border crossings in order to provide needed first aid, food, and water to migrants. There are also some shelters provided for women and children migrants.

**Profile: Jose, Rodrigo, and Don Pancho**

One would be hard pressed to meet with migrants crossing the Sonora Desert without feeling a sense of common humanity. Jose and Rodrigo showed up in Bird Camp late one morning. They had crossed over the border with a larger group, and shortly after entering the United States they were robbed by *bajadores*, bandits who prey upon the migrants who pass nightly through their desert domain. Rodrigo had bruises around his left eye and a small cut on his temple from this encounter, and he and Jose had lost all the valuables that they were carrying. Both were tired, hungry, and thirsty, but we were gratified to see them carrying two of our gallon water jugs marked with a waypoint. Both men had some small blisters on their feet, and Rodrigo was suffering from acute diarrhea.

Over the next two days, as the men recovered, I learned a bit more about their lives, especially through my talks with Jose. He was from Michoacan, and he had four children, including two boys around the same age as my son, Orion, who was also in camp. Jose was a cook by trade and told us that if we would go into Arivaca and bring him back some *masa* and some other ingredients, he would prepare a meal for us. Like most of the visitors to camp, Jose and Rodrigo immediately began helping out, washing dishes, picking up trash, and digging the trenches around the main dining tent in case of rain.

Jose had given us explicit directions as to where Fernando, a member of their group, had been left behind at a mountain pass. When I returned late one morning with a small black

backpack, Jose said, “That’s Fernando’s. See the lettering on the front? I saw that all along the trail. I was walking just behind him.” In the backpack nothing remained except a folded up black plastic garbage bag and a toothbrush. This was all that we could find of the 62-year-old Don Fernando; this was all that remained of a life.

### **Working the Border: Implications for Human Services**

Undocumented immigration into the United States is a hugely controversial issue. Those who seek to take a humanitarian stand and participate in efforts to provide medical assistance, food, and water to migrants may find their efforts met with skepticism or outright opposition. Indeed, since 2008, 15 volunteers with No More Deaths have been cited for “littering” in the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. These volunteers were caught leaving sealed gallons of clean water along migrant trails notorious for immigrant deaths. In their court appearances, volunteers have argued that humanitarian assistance is not a crime. These court cases have brought the group into the regional and national spotlight (Gandossy, 2009).

The need for humanitarian assistance remains very high, and volunteers will find that they will use all of their skills and develop new ones in this important work. For human services providers as well as for the institutions training them, there are some key issues to remember.

- Humanitarian assistance is not against the law, but work with organizations such as No More Deaths may be seen as controversial. This is the case at our university. Therefore, institutions interested in having their students participate on the border may wish to go through organizations that are more overtly educational, such as Borderlinks ([www.borderlinks.org](http://www.borderlinks.org)). Borderlinks will provide an excellent introduction to the border issues, as well as introduce students to the work of groups such as No More Deaths. Many of our summer volunteers had their first border experience through Borderlinks.

- If you would like to bring a group to the border, consider spring break (March) or the summer months, as these are the deadly months in the Sonora Desert, and volunteers will have a huge impact. If you have some fluency in Spanish or some medical training, your skills will be well utilized in the border area. University Spanish language programs and nursing programs could find that some time spent on the border would be beneficial to students and relatively inexpensive.
- The border experience is a place for individual growth and reflection for students, professors, and other professionals. We have found that it has a tremendous impact on our own perspectives regarding immigration and on our teaching. In northeastern Wisconsin, we prepare teachers and human services providers who will work with the growing Hmong and Latino communities in our area. The border experience helps us to get a better glimpse of the trials and perseverance of the Mexican and Latin American immigrants who have crossed through the desert. It also gives us some additional insight into the dangerous crossing of Laos and the Mekong River, a journey made by many of the members of our Hmong community. There is something universal about the border crossing experience, something that those of us who have not had to leave our native land have never faced. It gives us a sense of the everyday heroism present in our immigrant and refugee communities, a heroism that should be honored.

Humanitarian work on the U.S.-Mexican border is not for everyone. But for human services providers and others, who wish to meet the challenges posed by the border, the needs are high and the personal rewards can be very great. One of my rewards came late on a Friday night, about one month after my return from Arizona. Jose called. He was in Idaho, working with his brother, driving a potato truck. One more walker had survived the desert.

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CHAPTER 10

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WORKFORCE AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TRAINING MODEL FOR  
INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM OR ASPERGER'S DISORDER  
WHO EXHIBIT SAVANT SKILLS OR GIFTEDNESS: A PILOT PROGRAM'S OUTCOMES

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## Abstract

There are currently national and international workforce and independent living skills training models available for individuals with special needs. However, none of the models takes into consideration the intellectual complexity of individuals with autism who possess the element of giftedness that some high-functioning autistic individuals display. The purpose of this project at the Tailor Institute was to develop and implement a model whereby a group of individuals with autism might be evaluated for their type and level of giftedness and subsequently identify workforce opportunities. This article provides an overview of the pilot project, its funding, and a description of the procedures used by the Tailor Institute to identify, select, train, and place candidates in appropriate job sites. Collectively, this material provides a general framework for organizations or individuals interested in serving people with a diagnosis of high-functioning autism or Asperger's disorder, who exhibit savant skills or giftedness and who have the goal of obtaining independent, long-term employment.

## **An Overview of the Tailor Institute's Philosophy and Background**

The mission of the *Tailor Institute* is to empower individuals with high-functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger's Disorder (AD) to obtain independent, long-term employment. The program focuses on defining the specific skills and talents of gifted individuals with HFA or AS, identifying employers who require these skills, and offering training to both the individuals and their employers in order to facilitate successful job placements. The program starts with an interview, and, once accepted, participants are evaluated to identify skills and areas of giftedness. Upon successful completion of this initial phase, an individualized program is designed for each person. Following appropriate training sessions, the Tailor Institute establishes a complimentary match between a participant and an employer. The Tailor Institute team provides 100% support for participants until they function independently, thereby facilitating successful long-term employment.

Founded in 2003 by the father of an individual with high-functioning autism, the Tailor Institute (TTI) was designed to provide gifted individuals on the autism spectrum the tools they need to live and work as independently as possible. The Tailor Institute researched areas of giftedness in individuals with high functioning autism/Asperger's disorder and related workforce opportunities. Next Dr. Alan Lincoln and Dr. David Krug (2006) created an evaluation model to assess levels of workforce skills and areas of giftedness in potential participants. The model was tested in 2006 with six pilot participants. In 2007, The Tailor Institute began the development stage. Presently (2009), approximately 20 individuals are involved in the program at some point ranging from the assessment through the completion phase.

This article provides a brief overview of the pilot project, its findings, and a description of the procedures used by the Tailor Institute to identify, select, train, and place candidates in

appropriate job sites. Collectively, this material provides a general framework for organizations or individuals interested in serving people with a diagnosis of high-functioning autism or Asperger's disorder, who exhibit savant skills or giftedness and who have the goal of obtaining independent, long-term employment.

## **Description of the Proposed Program and its Specific Features for Implementation**

### **Introduction**

The goal of the Tailor Institute program is to identify the specific skills and talents of gifted individuals with high-functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger's disorder (AD) and to translate these savant skills into long-term career opportunities, in order to empower these individuals to achieve independence and to reduce or eliminate their need for government supports.

There are currently national and international workforce and independent living skills training models (see Appendix A) available for individuals with special needs (Grandin & Duffy, 2004; Hawkins, 2005; Myles & Simpson, 2002). However, none of the models takes into consideration the intellectual complexity of individuals with autism who possess the element of giftedness that some high-functioning autistic individuals display (Schutte, 2009a; Hawkins, 2005). The purpose of this project at the Tailor Institute was to develop and implement a model whereby a group of individuals with autism might be evaluated for their type and level of giftedness and subsequently be matched with workforce opportunities. The program was aimed at designing a customized workforce and independent living skills training model. Special attention was given to maximizing individuals' giftedness with the specific goal of obtaining employment. This model has been fine-tuned and is ready to be replicated throughout the state of Missouri by agencies associated with the Department of Economic Development.

## **Justification for the Program**

Many individuals with autism exhibit exceptional math, science, art, and logic skills (e.g. Dawson, Soulieres, Gernsbacher & Mottron, 2007; Grandin & Duffy, 2004; Grandin, 1995; Kehrer, 1992; Rimland, 1978a, 1978b; Treffert, 1989; Young & Nettlebeck, 1994, 1995), and individuals with autism often demonstrate punctuality, consistency, attention to detail, and a respect for rules (Copley, 2008; Korin, 2009). However, there are no data available that link these specific skill sets to gainful employment. Such data are particularly crucial in light of an astonishing increase in the incidence of autism. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009), the incidence of autism spectrum disorders, once believed to be 1:5000, is by some accounts now 1:150, which indicates that as many as 3 million Americans are afflicted with this disorder. An apparent growth rate of 10 to 17 percent per year, as suggested by the U.S. Department of Education and adjunct governmental agencies monitoring autism and other disabilities, suggests that the number of Americans with ASD could exceed 4 million in the next decade (Grandin, 2004). Dawson, et al. (2007) believe that intelligence has been underestimated in individuals affected by autism spectrum disorder (Krug, 2007). Therefore, with early intervention and support, thousands of individuals with high functioning autism should be capable of living independently and becoming gainfully employed, but only if their gifts and competencies are identified and fostered (Arick, Nave, Hoffman & Krug, 2004; Gerhardt & Homes, 2004).

Reports of successful individuals with autism show that these individuals can make remarkable contributions to society (e.g., Cameron, 1998; Grandin, 1995; Grandin & Duffy, 2004; Gerhardt & Holmes, 2004; Howlin, Alcock, & Burkin, 2005; Rimland & Fein, 1988; Treffert, 1989). On the other hand, the cost of caring for individuals with autism who cannot

transition to independence and successful employment is heavy (Fujiura, Roccoforte, & Braddock, 1994; Ganz, 2007; Järbrink, Fombonne, & Knapp, 2003; Järbrink & Knapp, 2001; Ruble, Heflinger, Renfrew, & Saunders, 2005), and this expense will increase exponentially as today's children with autism reach adulthood (Ganz, 2007). The research and program development driven by the Tailor Institute's model will empower individuals with high functioning autism to become successful adults, and the communities these individuals reside in will benefit from their talents and independence. Therefore it is important to educate the public and promote the availability of such a service to the families of autistic children as well as to the education and medical communities (Baron-Cohen, 2000).

### **Program's Model: Background Information and General Overview of its Development**

Due to the specific nature of high-functioning autism (HFA) and Asperger's disorder (AD), conditions that result in severe social and communication deficits (e.g., Grandin, 1995; Klin & Volkmar, 1997), yet bypass or even enhance skills such as memory, mathematical, and computer skills (e.g., Grandin, 1995; Krug, 2007; Rimland, 1978b; Young & Nettlebeck, 1994, 1995), no currently existing vocational programs are capable of addressing the needs of such individuals. Programs for non-disabled individuals cannot address impairments inherent to autism, and programs for the developmentally disabled typically focus on sheltered employment or low-level jobs (Nesbitt, 2000). As a consequence, the majority of individuals with HFA or AD remain unemployed despite normal or higher-than-normal IQs. The often remarkable job skills of these individuals (Mawhood & Howlin, 1999; Muller, Shuler, Burton, & Yates, 2003; Schutte, 2009a, 2009b) are overlooked.

To create a model for a vocational program relevant to the needs of this group, the Tailor Institute required extensive data on HFA and AD and the potential job market for

individuals with these disorders. In the phase I of this project, data was collected and synthesized regarding (a) the characteristics of individuals with HFA/AD who exhibit giftedness and savant skills, (b) the nature of these skills as they affect employability, (c) how these savant skills can translate into career success, and (d) the strengths and weaknesses of vocational and educational programs currently serving this population.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (DSM-IV), there are five pervasive developmental disorders frequently referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD): Autistic Disorder (AD), Asperger's Syndrome (AS), Pervasive Developmental Disorder Non-Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), Rett's Syndrome, and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). The umbrella term, ASD, embodies impaired social skills as a core deficit and defining feature (APA, 2000; Murray, Ruble, Willis, & Molloy, 2009). Additionally, primary characteristics include severe and pervasive deficits in communication and stereotypical patterns of behaviors, interests, and activities.

It has become common practice to describe individuals on the autism spectrum as falling into either the lower-functioning or higher-functioning range of cognition. However, research shows that core intelligence in individuals affected by autism spectrum disorders is often underestimated (Dawson et al., 2007). ASD individuals who might be described as 'high-functioning' are often described as *fluently verbal* although not devoid of challenges within language and communication (Vicker, 2009). It is important to remember that no two individuals on the spectrum are exactly alike. Research suggests that autism symptomology manifests at various levels of intensity and severity, and it is further noted that "specific social symptomology varies from person to person" (Murray et al., 2009, p. 110).

In adulthood, high-functioning individuals on the spectrum (which includes those with an Asperger's syndrome diagnosis) may present as well adapted on the surface, but remain stereotypically self-centered and aloof (Volkmar, 1987). In addition, they are at risk for experiencing difficulties in daily living and working with other people (Frith, 1991). Ultimately, their lack of social skills and inappropriate behavior are a major cause of unsuccessful employment (Schopler & Mesibov, 1983). Furthermore, co-morbid conditions, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, ADHD (more common in younger individuals), and depression (more common in older individuals), often evolve out of the core symptoms of ASD in high-functioning individuals (Klin & Volkmar, 1997).

Although not exclusive to autism spectrum disorder, another condition occurs in approximately 10% of ASD individuals: *savant syndrome* (Rimland & Fein, 1988). Savant syndrome is described as a spectacular condition in which a person may exhibit “astonishing islands of ability, brilliance, or talent that stand in stark, markedly incongruous contrast to overall handicap (talented savants); in others, in a much rarer form of an already rare disorder, the ability would be spectacular in a normal person (prodigious savants)” (Treffert, 1989, p. 68). It is suggested that savant syndrome is generally limited to five areas of expertise (music, art, lightning calculation, mechanical/spatial, and hyperlexia), with memory serving as an underpinning for all (Cameron, 1998; Rimland & Fein, 1988). Other skills reported less often include: polyglotism or “fluen[cy] in multiple languages” (O'Connor & Hermelin, 1991; Smith & Tsimpli, 1995); unusual sensory discrimination abilities in smell, touch, or vision (Rimland, 1978a); perfect appreciation of the passage of time without knowledge of a clock face; athleticism or superior coordination and balance skills (Rimland 1978a, 1978b; Rimland & Fein,

1988; Young & Nettlebeck, 1995); and outstanding knowledge in specific fields such as neurophysiology, statistics, or navigation (Kehrer, 1992; Rimland, 1978a).

During phase I, the Tailor Institute project concentrated on researching the areas of giftedness in individuals with autism in relation to workforce opportunities. This was followed by the creation of an evaluation tool to determine levels of workforce skills and areas of giftedness in potential candidates with high-functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger's Disorder (AD).

Drs. Alan Lincoln and David Krug (2006) at the Autism Research Institute (ARI) used research data collected in phase I to (a) develop a model that includes working definitions for giftedness, high-functioning autism (HFA), and Asperger's disorder (AD); (b) recommend tools for identifying HFA and AD individuals with savant skills and talents and assessing whether their levels of social, communication, and daily-living skills were adequate (or could be raised to an adequate degree) to permit independent employment; and (c) provide recommendations for the curriculum to be used in this project. In development of the Tailor Institute's model, Drs. Alan Lincoln and David Krug (2006) considered the following factors to ensure successful implementation.

#### **Definitions and assessments.**

Drs. Lincoln and Krug worked to develop a working definition for giftedness (savant), high-functioning autism (HFA), and Asperger's disorder (AD), as well as to provide a list of assessment tools to identify and screen six young adults for the pilot study.

In the section below, the authors present Drs. Lincoln and Krug's rationale for a differential definition for higher-functioning autism and Asperger's disorder. Also, the authors assert that roughly 10% of individuals with the diagnosis of AD have savant skills, and offer a

protocol and a list of recommended instruments for identification and screening of young adults (see Appendix B).

**Working definition for giftedness (savant), high functioning autism (HFA) and Asperger disorder (AD).**

Drs. Alan Lincoln and David Krug (2006) argue that behaviorally defined disorders of the brain are based on dimensional criteria, and both HFA and AD are defined behaviorally. At the extremes of dimensional definitions there is typically 100% consensus, but differential diagnosis of similar conditions can become vague. As years of conflicting research has shown, there is no sharp distinction between HFA and AD, and, as in other brain disorders which are dimensionally defined, there can be numerous different etiologies resulting in the same or similar medical conditions. It is not known whether AD and HFA are distinct syndromes with different patterns of underlying brain pathology or whether AD is just a “less severe” form of HFA.

In adopting diagnostic consensus criteria for the diagnosis of autistic disorder and Asperger’s syndrome, the American Psychiatric Association (2000) agreed to use the presence of a distinct abnormality in early language development as the pivotal marker to distinguish the two disorders. It also emphasized that in AD, intellectual skills were preserved. Thus, HFA, which by definition includes preserved intellectual ability, would only be distinguished from AD by early evidence of aberrant and atypical language development (in AD phrase speech must emerge by age three). Consequently, because persons with HFA eventually acquire language and eventually focus their conversational discourse on topics related to their special interests in a manner similar to persons with AD, the pivotal diagnostic criteria between HFA and AD remains the early pattern of language development. With notable exceptions, many researchers agree that HFA and

AD are on the same spectrum, with AD persons having fewer and less intense symptoms than HFA individuals (Lord & Corsello, 2005).

Lincoln and Krug (2006) provided the following working definitions for High Functioning Autism (HFA), Asperger's Disorder (AD), and giftedness (Savant) to identify and screen six young adults for the pilot program.

**HFA defined.**

By definition, individuals with high-functioning autism exhibit normal intelligence. This has generally meant that measured intelligence is above the range found in persons with mental retardation (IQ scores roughly above 70). There is no consensus regarding whether global IQ scores, verbal IQ scores, or more performance-based IQ scores must all be above the range defining mental retardation. In fact, a good deal of contemporary research on HFA requires only that less verbal, performance-based measures be above 70. The identification HFA is based primarily on the three areas of sociability, language, and stereotypes. These three "core areas" must be identified as abnormal in early development (typically before age three), and, though specific symptoms may change or moderate over time, abnormalities in each of these three domains remain evident throughout life. Impaired sociability and empathy observed in defective facial scanning and recognition is considered a core deficit. Another primary area of deficit is language, as demonstrated by inadequate conversational skills, odd word choices, and difficulty responding to questions. Rigidity, stereotypes, and perseveration also are considered required markers.

**AD defined.**

Individuals with Asperger's disorder, by definition, are in the normal intelligence range and have relatively normal language development. Persons with AD show marked deficiencies in

social skills, can have difficulties with transitions or changes, and prefer “sameness”. Often an AD person has obsessive routines and may be preoccupied with a particular subject of interest. Language stereotypes and repetitive motor behaviors can be quite prominent in individuals with AD, often to a greater degree than in persons with HFA. As is also true with some HFA individuals, the vocabularies of individuals with AD may be extraordinarily rich but extremely literal, with pronounced difficulty using language in a social context.

### **Savant syndrome defined.**

Indications are that from 10 to 20 percent of persons with high-functioning autism and Asperger’s disorder have savant skills. These skills typically include prodigious memory and special abilities involving numbers, mathematics, and mechanical and spatial skills. Anecdotal reports indicate that many persons with Asperger’s disorder can be found in science-based occupations and computer-related employment. Treffert (2000) separates savant performance into two categories: Savant I includes talented individuals whose skills are remarkable in contrast to their handicapping condition, and Savant II are those whose skills are seen as spectacular in comparison to all other people.

### **Neuropsychological factors in high functioning autism and Asperger’s syndrome.**

In their proposed model for our pilot program, Lincoln and Krug (2006) noted that extensive work involving the characterization of neuropsychological processing has revealed several important findings regarding persons with HFA or AS. These findings include the identification of skills that remain typically well developed and those that show evidence of neurodevelopmental compromise. The pattern of well developed skills in persons with HFA and AS is an important factor that relates not only to adaptive abilities, but also to the very symptoms that characterize how individuals function in the context of their disorder. For example, recent

research suggests that the pattern of executive function abilities predict restricted and stereotyped behaviors in persons with HFA (Lopez, Lincoln, Ozonoff, & Lai, 2005). Also, persons with HFA and AS usually have relatively well developed visual-spatial, visual-motor, and visual reasoning skills. As discussed earlier, it is often these very skills that indicate normal levels of intelligence. However, there are clearly bright individuals with HFA or AS who demonstrate significantly impaired visual-motor ability as well as clear dyspraxia. Problems in planning, initiating, and organizing complex voluntary motor skills can be quite challenging for such individuals, and consequently there need to be accommodations, modifications, and alternatives in academic or work contexts that place emphasis on such skills.

Another area of relative strength in HFA or AS is reading and verbal expression; it is possible for individuals with HFA and AS to have extensive vocabularies and well developed sight word reading and spelling skills. However, these basic language and academic abilities may not be supported by broad comprehension. This can be particularly true if such comprehension requires the integration of contextually relevant information, theory of mind, or the recognition of social convention. For example, a young man, who memorized everything needed to complete his written driving examination and completed the actual driving portion of his exam, remained at a traffic light that failed to change from red to green because he had memorized that red means stop and to remain stopped until the light changes. Such problems with comprehension lead to problems in judgment, particularly social judgment, and these problems are often the basis of undesired behaviors in the community or in school.

It is therefore important when making educational or vocational recommendations to critically evaluate basic executive function and intellectual and academic skills in order to best understand important neuropsychological strengths and weaknesses that might vary from person

to person. Fortunately, there are well-established measures suitable for such purposes for adults with HFA or AS (Lincoln, Hanzel & Quirnbach, 2006; Lopez et al., 2005).

After identification and screening, young adults with savant skills who meet the above criteria for high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome are given a battery of tests to assess their intelligence, executive functions, adaptive skills, and achievement. Appendix B provides a protocol for identification and screening with a list of suggested instruments based on the Lincoln and Krug (2006) recommendations. Lincoln and Krug offered the following specific diagnostic and exclusionary criteria for selection of individuals with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

**Specific diagnostic criteria: autism.**

Individuals with AD will meet the full diagnostic criteria for AD according to DSM-IV (APA, 2000). In addition, all participants will meet the criteria for autism on the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) (Rutter, Lecouter, & Lord, 1989), the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) (Lord, et al., 2000) and the Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS) (Gilliam, 1995).

**Specific diagnostic criteria: Asperger's syndrome.**

Individuals with AS will meet the full diagnostic criteria for AS according to DSM-IV (APA, 2000). In addition, all participants will meet the criteria on two of the three ADI-R (Rutter et al., 1989) algorithms (Social and Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors) to verify historical and current symptoms. Similarly, they will meet the criteria on two of the three ADOS (Lord, et al., 2000) algorithms (Social and Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors) to verify current symptoms. Finally, they will achieve standard scores of 85 or greater on the Gilliam Asperger Rating Scale (Gilliam, 1995) for social impairments and restricted and repetitive behaviors. The individuals

with AS will have Verbal IQs above 85 or Verbal Reasoning Index scores above 85 on the WAIS-III (Wechsler, 1997).

**Specific exclusionary criteria for all participants.**

Participants should be excluded from the study if they have any of the following conditions: (a) mental retardation (Verbal and Performance IQ below 70); (b) severe visual impairment with corrected lens; (c) hearing loss by report or found in audiological screening; (d) history of acquired brain damage; (e) a primary Axis I or II disorder of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, Tourette's syndrome, PDD-NOS (except for AD or AS), substance abuse/dependence, or adjustment disorder; (f) a significantly handicapping motor disorder such as cerebral palsy or paralysis of the upper or lower extremities; or (g) a medical disorder that would make it difficult to participate in the proposed program.

**Parameters for success.**

Drs. Lincoln and Krug worked to develop a list of parameters for success in the two categories of social/occupational skills and environmental/social skills.

Drs. Lincoln and Krug suggested a slightly modified version of the Functional Assessment and Curriculum for Teaching Everyday Routines (FACTER – Post School) (Arick, et al., 2004) as an assessment and curriculum for determining client social/occupational development and environmental/social skill deficits. These materials provide a screening assessment and an already developed curriculum that can effectively accommodate the two categories of social/occupation skills and environmental/social skills required for independent client functioning in public settings. The five domains focused on by this modified FACTER-Post School are Living Skills, Transition, Leisure, Community, and Career. The Client Booklet cover sheet has been modified to meet the requirements of this model. These materials are

abstracted/adapted from the FACTER program (Arick et al., 2004) and utilize the same independence measurement scale.

### **Utilizing client savant skills & job matching.**

Drs. Kruger and Lincoln worked to develop a strategy to utilize client areas of giftedness (savant skills) as a means for successful integration.

According to Lincoln and Krug (2006), savant skills are skills that an individual does exceptionally well. Job skills are abilities required for a specific job. Transferable skills are skills that can be used in many different jobs. Employers want employees who have or who can learn the skills necessary to do the job.

Lincoln and Krug (2006) suggest that before deciding in what job to place a client, *the implementing agency* must first determine what the client likes to do and then determine what the client's special skills are. Once these two areas are established, the implementing agency will seek to find the best match between the client's skills and an occupation. Drs. Lincoln and Krug identify the Holland Occupation Themes Instrument (Holland, 1973) as a tool to measure vocational interests and skills. This instrument is available on the web ([www.Doi.gov](http://www.Doi.gov)) and includes an extensive number of occupations and worker characteristics required for these occupations. The Holland Occupational Themes Instrument organizes interests and skills into the following six categories: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. It also codes occupations using three of the six categories. This instrument is an effective tool to identify and explore career options that are compatible with an individual's vocational interests and skills and would suit him or her over the long-term. Lincoln and Krug (2006) outlined the steps and procedure for determining client's interests and job match.

### **Curriculum model & facilitators guide.**

Drs. Lincoln and Krug (2006) worked to develop an outline that facilitators can use to effectively utilize savant skills to support client functioning in public settings. Lincoln and Krug believe that more employees are released because of communication and social problems than because of job skill deficiencies. Therefore, considerable pre-employment client training needs to focus on these skills. Additionally, on-site training should occur after an extensive task analysis of a specific job is accomplished. Also, following the task analysis, the savant skills a particular client brings to that job should be used as an entry point in learning other aspects of the job.

Drs. Lincoln and Krug (2006) recommend a model based loosely on the curriculum model presented by Trevor Clark (2001). Clark's (2001) Asperger-Savant Curriculum Outline for research (A-SCOR) is based on two simple concepts. The first is that communication and social skill deficits must be addressed in a direct manner, and that savant skills can be used as motivation for the client to work on improvement. The second concept is that a job matching the client's interests can be task-analyzed into teachable steps; that is, with time, repetition, and instruction, the job can be mastered by the client.

Clark's (2001) Asperger-Savant Curriculum Outline for research has two components, Form A and Form B. Form A enables the facilitator to list a detailed analysis of a task, supportive activities, and materials to enhance instruction. Form B prompts the facilitator to cross-reference client savant skill areas to social and/or communication deficits in order to come up with ideas to premeditate. The savant skills are used as intrinsic motivators to work on the deficit area listed in Column 1. Work on these deficit areas can begin before job placement and continue, as needed, following job placement.

Following job placement, but prior to beginning work, the job coach or mentor completes Column 4 of Form A in as detailed a fashion as possible. The task analysis requires substantial input from a person very familiar with the job. Column 1 of Form A is completed from information gained from the pre-assessment and identifies the savant skill level as Talented (I) or Prodigious (II). The Enrichment and Acceleration Columns (2 and 3) provide an opportunity for the coach/mentor to identify intrinsically motivating materials and activities for teaching skills that complement and enhance job performance.

## **Description of Procedure and Implementation of the Proposed Model and Testing**

### **Instruments**

#### **Revision of Model & Selection of Testing Instruments**

The Tailor Institute team completed initial review of the testing model that had been proposed by Drs. Lincoln and Krug at the Autism Research Institute (ARI). While the model developed by ARI is quite thorough and accurately identifies all areas requiring assessment, the proposed testing battery was unnecessarily complex and time-consuming for our specific purposes, and the information needed for our program could be collected in a more efficient and effective manner. In an effort to maximize use of the resources available to us, we decided to modify the model as follows.

- Screening of participants did not need to be completed by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist as described by the ARI model. This information was instead based on reliable data provided by qualified professional from secondary sources and gathered by Tailor Institute staff during the admission assessment.
- Cognitive scores were obtained from each subject's school records. Some were based on parental reports of these scores, as some of the participants had been out of school for

more than ten years. For all subjects, reported IQ appeared commensurate with performance during the assessment tasks. It was determined that further standardized cognitive testing would not yield information that would substantially alter the subjects' treatment. Therefore, the WAIS-III (Wechsler, 1994), the D-KEFS (Delis, Kaplan, & Kramer, 2001), and the WIAT-II (Wechsler, 2001) were not used. The Aberrant Behavior Checklist (Aman & Singh, 1986) was used and was administered during the admission testing session.

- A diagnosis of autism or Asperger's syndrome provided by each subject's healthcare provider or school was deemed to be sufficient for establishing the presence of an autism spectrum disorder. Therefore, the ADI-R (Rutter et al., 1989), the ADOS (Lord et al., 2000), and the GARS (Gilliam, 1995) were not administered.
- The Delis-Kaplan Executive Function Scale (D-KEFS) (Delis et al., 2001) was determined to be too limited in relevance to the Institute's project to be included as a testing item.

### **Identification of the Savant Skills of Participants to Create Curricula Utilizing These Skills**

Dr. Clark's (2001) *Savant Skill Curriculum* forms were used to identify the savant skills of participants and to create curricula utilizing these skills. The Institute also obtained the tests Dr. Clark selected for assessing individual savant skills or, in cases where tests were culture-specific or not readily available, obtained comparable versions of the testing tools. The selection of assessment tools for each individual was based on the areas of savant skill and interest identified by the Savant Skill Questionnaires and Profile of Savant Abilities Form.

Taylor Institute staff selected pilot project participants based on the protocol for identification and screening of young adults with savant skills who met criteria for high-

functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome developed by the ARI team (Lincoln & Krug, 2006) and the Tailor Institute staff.

Individuals who met the above criteria, and their parents, guardians, or caretakers (when applicable), were given the Participant Informed Consent Form, the Consent for Release of Information Form, the Medical-Family Questionnaire, and the Admission Criteria Questionnaire. Employment history was obtained if applicable. Additional assessment tools are described below.

### **Individual Assessment of Intelligence, Executive Function, Adaptive Skills and Achievement**

Tailor Institute staff used intelligence test scores, academic achievement test scores, and the Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised (Bruininks, Woodcock, Weatherman, & Hill, 1996) results, obtained from the participants' school records and the appropriate providers. The Aberrant Behavior Checklist-Community (Aman & Singh, 1986) was administered to assess for behaviors that might impact successful adaptive educational and vocational pursuits. The FACTER (Arick, et al., 2004) was administered to assess independent living skills. The Holland Occupation Themes Instrument (Holland, 1973) was administered to aid in determining vocational interests and skills.

### **Specific Diagnostic Criteria for Autism of Asperger Syndrome**

The official diagnosis of high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome for the participant was obtained from a provider.

### **Specific Exclusionary Criteria for All Participants**

Lincoln and Krug's (2006) recommendations about specific exclusionary criteria were

applied and participants were excluded from the program if they had any of the specified conditions.

The assessments and tests outlined above allowed the assessment team to determine (a) the IQ level and daily functioning skills of each candidate, and whether these were sufficient to allow for independent employment; (b) the deficits that needed to be addressed for each candidate to ensure success; (c) the specific talents, savant skills, and special interests of each candidate and how these could translate into career skills. The results of this assessment formed the basis for implementation of the educational and vocational interventions developed for each participant. Procedures for this implementation, as suggested by Drs. Lincoln and Krug (2006), are outlined in Appendix C.

### **Testing the Model: Key Findings, Recommendations for Implementations, and Conclusion**

In the process of reviewing Dr. Lincoln and Dr. Krug's testing protocol (2006), and during the process of the assessment itself, the staff determined that several elements of the protocol were unnecessarily time-consuming and/or involved information already available from schools or health care providers. Thus, the model was streamlined to make the testing process simpler. The Institute believes that the revised protocol will be significantly easier for other organizations to implement.

The Tailor Institute staff selected six candidates using the revised protocol. Testing revealed that all six candidates were appropriate for the project, with five candidates readily qualifying (although two, due to scheduling issues, will require additional standardized testing which will be scheduled as quickly as the candidates become available). The sixth candidate was selected after an extensive review of his profile of strengths and weaknesses. This candidate, a 13-year-old, illustrated the need for a flexible testing protocol that analyzes strengths as well as

weaknesses. The candidate, who is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (PDD-NOS, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified), is near the IQ cutoff for the project. However, he exhibits remarkable gifts in art and has already sold several of his paintings. The team determined that the candidate has significant potential, given the strength of his uncultivated talent and the fact that he has already had some success in translating his talent into financial reward.

The assessment revealed that each candidate had one or more savant skills that could realistically translate into career opportunities. While all candidates exhibited the behavioral, communication, and daily living skills impairments common in HFA/AD, the assessment indicated that these impairments were moderate enough that they could be successfully addressed by the curriculum to be used in Phase III (the training phase). The employment matrix developed during the research phase of the project revealed several potential “fits” for each candidate. Phase I and Phase II of the Tailor Institute’s project have been successfully completed, with participants entering the training phase of the program.

The Tailor Institute’s research confirmed that the programs with the highest success rates in transitioning individuals with HFA/AD into independent employment are those providing intensive intervention. The creation of long-term, high-quality job placements requires a three-pronged approach which addresses the needs of the job candidates themselves, the skills of the professionals responsible for preparing candidates for the workforce, and the needs of the employers who will be providing jobs.

Our experience in the training phase of the program revealed that each implementing agency should be responsible for identifying and training the following groups to deliver the model. There are four distinct training components in this model: (a) training of the

implementing agency's support staff, student interns, and/or volunteers; (b) independent living skills training of the program participants; (c) workforce skills training of the program participants; and (d) training of the host employers and co-workers. The steps are briefly explained in the following sections; however, the Tailor Institute has developed protocols for training staff, interns, and volunteers and for training and delivery of the model. This training protocol is available upon request.

A key finding of the project's initial phase was that three of our assumptions were strongly confirmed:

- The high success rate of vocational programs in Canada, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Australia (see Appendix A) that match individuals with savant skills to career opportunities is a strong validation of the Institute's approach. By networking with these programs, we will be able to incorporate their most successful techniques and gain from their experience.
- The histories of the Tailor Institute's initial six candidates are consistent with our findings that most individuals with HFA/AS are unemployed or under-employed. All six of our candidates have remarkable abilities – very similar to those of individuals with HFA and AS who are establishing careers with the help of the organizations mentioned above – and yet, left on their own, they have been unable to find or keep meaningful jobs.
- It is the Tailor Institute's assumption that the savant skills of individuals with autism can translate into long-term careers. Consistent with this assumption, the Institute's job matrix reveals that all candidates have savant skills that are highly desirable for area businesses, and these businesses are already expressing an interest in hiring individuals with HFA/AS.

Our research also identified a number of impairments that commonly stand in the way of gainful employment, and revealed that many of these issues can be easily addressed when employers are interested in helping employees with HFA/AS to succeed. Solutions range from addressing sensory issues (e.g., problems with ambient noise, odors, or fluorescent lighting), to offering “time-out” rooms for employees who become overly stressed, to enlisting coworkers to serve as go-betweens when problems arise. All of these approaches and many others uncovered during our pilot study phase will be incorporated into our program as we work with employers to establish optimal conditions for both workers with HFA/AS and the companies using their services.

We continue to foster our association with Dr. Clark, who is extensively involved with educational and vocational programs for individuals with HFA/AS worldwide. Since Australia is a leader in establishing vocational programs for HFA/AS, and because Dr. Clark has been at the forefront of this endeavor, we anticipate that his generous assistance will enable us to further refine our approach.

The process of creating an assessment model proved to be challenging, as the initial model was deemed more appropriate for a clinical setting than for a “real-life” academic or vocational program. Several significant modifications were made, which the Institute believes will make the testing protocol both highly effective and simple to use in a non-clinical setting. These changes, described earlier, will allow the model to be easily adopted by other programs.

There was a need for a flexible model weighing strengths and weaknesses, and for a subjective analysis of the testing data by a team of experts. This was revealed by one of our candidates, “borderline” as far as objective-testing criteria, but, in reality, already achieving some success in marketing his paintings at the age of 12. A model focusing only on impairments

would have overlooked this candidate, but the team believes that—given his young age and level of talent—he may prove to be one of the project’s most successful candidates.

We also learned that individuals with HFA/AS require more time to complete each test than is routinely allotted. In addition, they need frequent breaks because of their high anxiety level, a problem common in HFA/AS. These factors will be considered when scheduling future evaluations.

We are highly encouraged by the enthusiasm of our pilot participants, as well as their families. We also are pleased at the range of candidates selected, who represent an array of savant skills and vary in age from early teens to thirties, because this will allow us to test our model on a diverse population within our specified target group.

The Tailor Institute is currently listed in the *Autism Source* online referral database ([www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)). The program details have been forwarded to the Autism Society of America for review and approval. On a state level, the Tailor Institute has been included in the *Mo-FEAT Directory* ([www.mo-feat.org](http://www.mo-feat.org)).

The Tailor Institute has become familiar with the full array and variety of local Missouri Career Center opportunities. Furthermore, the Tailor Institute has made formal contact with the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and expressed the desire for inclusion in the SHARE Network for the purposes of expanding knowledge about potential resources. The Tailor Institute has also formally inquired about the Missouri Career Center Disability Navigator program and staff assistance offered by this program. The Tailor Institute has also become knowledgeable of the Missouri Career Center and state agency workforce development programs, and has actively included the Alchemy learning products in the Tailor Institute’s service model.

The Tailor Institute documented each stage of the project and developed structured forms and written protocols that will make it possible for other organizations and agencies to replicate this model in the future. This information, compiled into a manual, has been submitted to the State of Missouri's Department of Economic Development to be shared with the state's career centers and vocational rehabilitation programs.

It is clear from this experience that our participants have skills that are highly valued by the marketplace and possess the potential to achieve not just short-term employment but successful careers. This will translate into greater self-esteem and fulfillment for these individuals, and will be of enormous benefit to the state of Missouri, as the average lifetime cost of caring for a non-independent individual with autism can exceed two million dollars. If even one of the Tailor Institute's participants achieves financial independence, the savings will be substantial.

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Appendix 10A

Training Programs

**Examples of National and International Workforces and Independent Living Skills**

**Training Programs**

**AIM Employment Services, Autism Association of Western Australia**

TEL: (08) 9489 8900; FAX: (08) 9489 8999; EMAIL: autismwa@autism.org.au

**Chapel Haven Asperger's Syndrome Adult Transition Program (New Haven, CT)**

TEL: (203) 397-1714

**Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children**

751 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, MD 20851

TEL: (301) 762-1650; EMAIL: csaac@csaac.org

**Edge Employment Solutions (Australia)**

38 Hood Street, Subiaco, Western Australia 6008.

TEL: (08) 9286 6600; FAX: (08) 9286 6699; EMAIL: edge@edge.org.au

**Eden W.E.R.C. (Word Education and Resource Centers)**

One Eden Way, Princeton, NJ 08540

<http://www.edenservices.org/index.jsp>

TEL: (609) 987-0099; FAX: (609) 987-0243

**EmployAlliance (Illinois)**

[www.westsuburbanchamber.org](http://www.westsuburbanchamber.org)

Ms. Lisa Zeigler, Executive Director, West Suburban Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Lisa Zeigler President and CEO 1916 West 174<sup>th</sup> Street East Hazel Crest, IL, 60429

Tel: 708-957-6950

**Hawkin's Institute (Canada)**

EMAIL: [info@hawkinsinstitute.com](mailto:info@hawkinsinstitute.com)

**MOVINGINTOWORK (Scotland)**

Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY, Scotland

<http://www.intowork.org.uk/employment/asperger.htm>

TEL: 0131 475 2369; FAX: 0131 475 2379.

**Prospects, National Autism Society (UK)**

393 City Road, London, EC1V 1NG, United Kingdom

TEL: +44(0) 20 7833 2299; FAX +44 (0)20 7833 9666; EMAIL: [nas@nas.org.uk](mailto:nas@nas.org.uk)

**Specialisterne (Denmark)**

[www.specialisterne.dk](http://www.specialisterne.dk)

TEL: (+45) 86 12 56 60; FAX: (+45) 86 12 56 90.

**TEACCH (Chapel Hill, NC)**

TEL: (919) 966-2174

**Examples of Model Programs For High Functioning Individuals with Autism Spectrum**

**Disorder**

**Asperger Syndrome Curriculum and Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT)**

41 Cook Street, Forestville NSW 2087, Australia.

TEL: (02) 8977 8300; FAX: (02) 8977 8399; EMAIL: [tclark@aspect.org.com](mailto:tclark@aspect.org.com) (Dr. Trevor Clark)

**Brevard Center: College Internship Program (Melbourne, FL)**

[www.collegeinternshipprogram.com](http://www.collegeinternshipprogram.com)

**Center for Autism Research, Evaluation and Service (CARES)**

6160 Cornerstone Ct. East, #255, San Diego, CA 92121

<http://www.caresnpa.com>

TEL: (858) 623-2777 (Alan Lincoln)

**Gifted Development Center (Denver, CO)**

Linda Silverman

1452 Marion Street Denver, Colorado 80218

1-888-GIFTED1 (Continental US only) \* 303-837-8378

Fax: 303-831-7465

**Gifted Resource Center of New England**

PO Box 40326, Providence, RI 02940-0326.

TEL: (401) 421-3426; EMAIL: GRCNE02940@aol.com

**Hope University**

800 South Lemon St., Anaheim, CA 92805 or PO Box 8495, Anaheim, CA 92812

TEL: (714) 778-4440; EMAIL: [infor@hope-arts.org](mailto:infor@hope-arts.org)

**Marshall University: Model College Program, The College Program for Students with  
Asperger's Syndrome**

Autism Training Center, One John Marshall Drive, Huntington, WV 25755

TEL: (304) 696-2332.

**ORION Academy**

350 Rheem Blvd., Moraga, CA 94556

TEL: (925) 377-0789

**Sheridan Technical Center “PASS” Program**

5400 Sheridan Street, Hollywood, FL 33021

[http://www.sheridantechnical.com/spe\\_high.html](http://www.sheridantechnical.com/spe_high.html)

TEL: (754) 321-5400

**SOUNDSCAPE, Redhill College (UK)**

Philanthropic Road, Redhill, Surrey, UK RH1 4DG.

TEL: 01737-768935

**The Savant Academy**

PO Box 5341, Playa del Rey, CA 90296

<http://www.savantacademy.org/>

## Appendix 10B

### Screening and Assessments

#### **Protocol for Identification and Screening of the Young Adults with Savant Skills Meeting**

##### **Criteria for High Functioning Autism or Asperger Syndrome**

Phone screening by a qualified person (i.e., QMRP, SLP, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) will be completed in a manner that ascertains (a) a previous diagnosis of either autism or Asperger's syndrome, (b) evidence that the individual is not considered to have mental retardation, (c) no history of a significant medical condition or other mental disorder, (d) evidence that the individual has successfully graduated from high school, (e) evidence that the individual does not have a history of serious misdemeanors or felonies, (f) evidence that the individual does not have a substance abuse disorder or dependency, (g) evidence that the individual is seeking a post-secondary opportunity to develop academic and vocational skills, and (h) evidence that the individual demonstrates specific skills or knowledge that represent savant characteristics.

##### **Suggested List of Instruments for Assessment of Subjects' Intelligence, Executive Functions, Adaptive Skills, and Achievement (Lincoln & Krug, 2006):**

Intelligence: the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (WAIS-III) (Wechsler, 1997)

Executive Functions: the Delis-Kaplan Executive Function Scale (D-KEFS) (Delis et al., 2001)

Academic Achievement: the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT-II) (Wechsler, 2001)

- Testing will be completed in two three-hour time blocks.

- Individuals achieving scores below 70 on either Verbal Comprehension or Perceptual Reasoning indexes will not undergo achievement testing with the WIAT-II (Wechsler, 2001) or executive function testing with the D-KEFS (Delis et al., 2001).
- The Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised (Bruiniks, et al., 1996) will be completed by a caretaker who is knowledgeable about the functioning capabilities of each individual. This scale includes measures of pertinent adaptive behaviors and yields standard scores in four domains of adaptive skill, including motor skills, social and communication skills, personal living skills, and community living skills. It also provides a review of eight behavior domains and yields internalizing and externalizing behavior standard scores.
- The Aberrant Behavior Checklist-Community (Aman & Singh, 1986) will also be administered to assess for atypical behaviors that might impact successful adaptive educational and vocational pursuits.

## Appendix 10C

### **Procedures for Implementation, as Suggested by Drs. Lincoln and Krug (2006)**

Step 1: Identification of subjects through the Savant Skill Nomination Form.

Step 2: Assessment and verification of savant ability through non-standardized measures (Savant Skills Questionnaire-Family & Teacher, informal checklist of abilities, computer checklist, etc.). Testing of individuals using appropriate standardized test measures, when test results are not otherwise obtained and documented by the Tailor Institute assessment team. Administration of pre-test measures of communication and social skills, behavior, self-esteem, and autism. Completion of the Profile of Savant Abilities Form summarizing savant skill pre-study measures.

Step 3: Formulation of Individual Savant Skill programs using the Curriculum Strategy Annual Priorities Form A and the Curriculum Strategy Annual Teaching Activities Forms B and C – designed for the study inclusive of annual priorities and teaching strategies.

Step 4: Meeting with family, teacher, or guardian to review results of previous IQ and achievement test scores, assessments, and IEP reports acquired from school information or health care provider, and to introduce the Individual Savant Skill Programs. Determination of initiation date of the participant's individual program.

Step 5: Ongoing monitoring of Savant Skill Programs, attendance at annual Individual Education Plan Meetings (if applicable), completion of Savant Skill Teaching Timelines (each week), written and verbal monitoring of all participants as required in the Assessment Tool written for The Tailor Institute.

Step 6. Evaluation of the Curriculum- Form D (teachers and interns) Savant Skill Post Study Family and Teacher Questionnaire.

## CHAPTER 11

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### ASSESSING AND TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY: A PATHWAY TO INCREASING CLIENT EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-EFFICACY

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*Lindsey Wilson College*

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*Troy University*

*Authors' Note: In most instances the authors have chosen to use the term "helper" to generically refer to professional helpers (e.g. counselors, social workers, caseworkers, human services providers, etc.) in the human services professions.*

#### Abstract

Self-advocacy is arguably the most empowering form of advocacy. Empowerment can be linked to a greater sense of self-efficacy. In recent history, groups of self-advocates have empowered both civil and disability rights movements in the US. Human services workers can promote a greater sense of empowerment and self-efficacy in their clients by assessing and teaching self-advocacy. The chapter explores (a) the power and impact of self-advocacy; (b) the relationship between self-advocacy, empowerment, and self-efficacy; and (c) strategies and models for assessing and teaching self-advocacy. Specific guidelines are provided for how human services professionals can promote the development of self-advocacy and empowerment in their clients.

## **What is Self-Advocacy?**

“Self-advocacy” is a combination of two terms that have evolved in our culture in recent years to represent an important and powerful construct. The combined use of these terms does not exist in *The American Heritage College Dictionary* (1993) utilized by one of the authors during his doctoral program. However, the term “advocacy” is revealed to be a combination of the Latin *ad + vocare*, essentially meaning, “to call for something”. In the same author’s *Roget’s 21st Century Thesaurus* (1992), advocacy is synonymous with words and phrases such as: to support, bolster, campaign, champion, encourage, further, “go to bat for,” justify, plead for, promote, support, urge, etc. Thus, it could be said that in its basic form, self-advocacy is to call for, campaign for, plead for, and to champion causes of interest to oneself. Although self-advocacy may be learned, much like empowerment it must ultimately be self-generated, which is to say that it is not something that is “given” to a client; rather, it requires client participation (McWhirter, 1991).

## **Why is Self-Advocacy Important?**

In a society where consumer preferences guide the economic and social marketplace, the role and importance of self-advocacy has risen dramatically. Historically, self-advocacy in some form or fashion has been important to the evolution of many societies. Embodying individual and group expression, self-advocacy has been an impetus for individual and societal progress. The Biblical Scriptures state, “You have not, because you ask not” (James 4:2, New International Version), which is arguably a suggestion that the failure or inability to self-advocate (whether with God or mankind) perpetuates a life characterized by disempowerment. Furthermore, there is strong historical evidence that advocacy implemented at a grass roots or personal level is the impetus for most societal change. Both the early civil rights movement and the disability rights movement in the US are examples of “bottom up” or grassroots advocacy that was not initiated by government

leaders or spawned by legislation; rather, the legislation that followed was an outcome of a collection of individuals who dared to self-advocate.

At a personal level, the act of self-advocacy provides individuals with a greater sense of control and empowerment in their lives. According to Covey (1989), *proactive behavior* such as self-advocacy leads to numerous benefits including an expansion of one's *circle of influence*. It is important to note that teaching clients to self-advocate facilitates greater autonomy; however, advocating for clients, although helpful in one sense, may diminish their sense of autonomy (Moxley & Hyduk, 2003). As autonomy and individual choice increases in both depth and breadth, this subsequent exhibition of empowerment often leads to a greater sense of self-efficacy (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 1998). For example, if a single parent learns to self-advocate for child support from a negligent ex-spouse, leading to greater financial stability, a likely result is both a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy that grows from the autonomous exercise of the individual's will. As a result, one's sense of self-efficacy (the ability to mobilize one's resources as a means for altering one's environment) increases. This increased sense of self-efficacy is often linked with an expanded circle of influence resulting in a "spread effect," that is, in multiple areas of a client's life being impacted. This spread effect will often manifest in at least two ways: (a) the change that occurs from a single act of self-advocacy often carries over into additional areas, and (b) the benefits accrued from the outcome of self-advocacy are likely to result in a greater confidence in an ability to initiate change in other areas of concern. Furthermore, there may be unanticipated secondary benefits in the larger domain of mental health, such as decreased levels of depression resulting from pro-activity.

## **Self-Advocacy, Self-Efficacy, and Empowerment**

Bandura spoke of self-efficacy as the ability to mobilize cognitive and behavioral skills so as to be able to deal effectively with one's environment (cited in Lewis et al., 1998, p. 127).

McWhirter (1991) defined self-efficacy as "an individual's or group's belief in its ability to accomplish specific tasks or behaviors" (p. 224). Self-efficacy is both a crucial component to and outcome of self-advocacy (Lewis et al., 1998). The ability to make use of one's skills is dependent on whether or not the individual *believes* he/she is capable, which is the essence of self-efficacy. Completing the circle of interconnectedness, Zimmerman (1990) notes that self-efficacy can also lead to empowerment. From the authors' viewpoint, in a practical sense, self-efficacy and empowerment are interdependent; one is both necessary for and an outcome of the other, and learning and practicing self-advocacy can be the catalyst.

McWhirter (1991) believes that helping relationships should always have client empowerment as a goal. Client empowerment is accomplished as clients resolve problems in their lives (Moxley & Hyduk, 2003). Resolving problems in one's life is often a product of successful self-advocacy and the convergent sense of self-efficacy that flows with it. If the concepts of self-advocacy, self-efficacy, and empowerment are intertwined and interdependent, then it becomes crucial to help clients learn how to self-advocate. Helpers are in an ideal position to assist clients with the assessment and development of self-advocacy skills.

Gehart and Lucas (2007) argue that the relationship between helper and client is the greatest tool for advocating for a client. The emphasis on relationship as the critical and most powerful factor in human behavior as it relates to change is consistent with the long-standing views of Carl Rogers (1957, 1965) as expressed in Person-Centered Therapy. As such, it behooves helpers to concentrate on establishing and maintaining strong relationships with their clients as a

foundation to promoting self-advocacy. The authors further suggest that a large part of that relationship should consist of Rogers' (1957) core conditions of unconditional positive regard, accurate empathy, and genuineness. These aspects of any helper/client relationship engender trust and have thus proven to increase the likelihood of change (Rogers, 1965). Within the context of a strong relationship, helpers are better positioned to assist clients in learning how to self-assess and self-advocate more effectively.

### **Assessing Self-Advocacy**

It is also important to recognize the role of environment in empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990). Clients may be empowered in some areas of their lives and not others. Thus, it is fundamental for helpers to assist clients in assessing their levels of self-advocacy within particular aspects of their lives and target training in areas where growth is desirable. One way this can be accomplished is via the authors' proposed Self-Advocacy Questionnaire and Interview Protocol (see Appendix A - Figure 11.1). This structured interview protocol can serve as a valuable tool for determining where a client needs to develop self-advocacy and in what areas self-advocacy is already operating.

Assessing levels of a variety of behaviors associated with self-advocacy is an important step in determining a clients' understanding of self-advocacy and their need for training. Because currently there are no concise, standardized, or widely accepted measures of behaviors linked with self-advocacy, the authors propose a Self-Advocacy Behavioral Indicator for use by human service professionals (see Appendix B - Figure 11.2). The intent of proposing such an instrument is to determine whether it holds practicality for use by diverse participants and is thus worthy of some level of standardization in the field. The authors wish to hear from human services workers

who are willing to use or field test the instrument as part of the process of determining its usefulness.

### **Teaching Self-Advocacy**

Self-advocacy can be taught. Teaching individuals to advocate for themselves exemplifies the adage “it is better to teach a person to fish, than simply give them a fish” (Anonymous). Once learned, self-advocacy is a skill that can empower individuals and create greater self-efficacy in a variety of situations throughout their lives (Lewis, et al., 1998; Zimmerman, 1990). Ultimately, one’s overall quality of life can be impacted by acquisition of these important skills.

Self-advocacy can be taught in a variety of ways. Several curriculums exist for teaching advocacy, and some materials are available via the internet (Agosta, Melda, & Terrill, 2009; Orr & Rogers, 2008). Many training materials are targeted at particular populations such as persons with specific disabilities or concerns. When making a choice of curriculum, many factors may be considered: the specific needs of an individual, personal interests, learning styles and intelligences, and developmental level. Some general suggestions for teaching self-advocacy include the following:

- Assess client interest and motivation for self-advocacy. Help clients review their histories related to self-advocacy and determine their perceptions of its value for them.  
Recognizing potential practical outcomes that may flow from self-advocacy is the first step to embracing it as a viable strategy.
- Identify specific reasons why a client would benefit from self-advocacy. Clients need to have a rationale for becoming self-advocates. It is essential to establish personal reasons or motivating factors to self-advocate.

- Provide clients a framework in which to express self-advocacy. Help clients use their personal needs for self-advocacy as a framework for training, role-playing, and initiating self-advocacy.
- Provide clients a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of their self-advocacy. Helpers should offer their observations and feedback to clients as a mechanism for continuous evaluation and improvement of their self-advocacy skills.

There are a number of curriculums, some formal, some informal, that have been devised for teaching self-advocacy to particular groups of individuals based upon specific identifying characteristics and environments (e.g., race, gender, disability, etc.) After reviewing several models for teaching self-advocacy the authors have developed a Synthesized Model for Teaching Self-Advocacy (see Appendix C - Figure 11.3). The model is the result of the authors' efforts to both combine and simplify the basic elements necessary for teaching self-advocacy. It is also proposed as a generic model that can be applicable to many consumers in a variety of settings with various needs.

As an aid to clarifying implementation of the self-advocacy training model, a scenario is presented in Appendix D - Figure 11.4 entitled An Example of Implementation – Synthesized Model for Teaching Self-Advocacy. This scenario may be helpful in obtaining a greater understanding of how the training model can play out in a client's life.

### **Summary**

As human services workers, one of the greatest forms of empowerment we can bestow on our clients is the ability to adopt self-advocacy as a life-long strategy for improving their lives. Becoming skilled at self-advocacy will facilitate a clients' ability to maintain a personal sense of empowerment and self-efficacy in the world around them. It is one strategy that helpers can

implement to help clients become more proactive in their lives and expand their circle of influence. Because self-advocacy can be assessed, taught, and implemented with most clients, it is a viable strategy for improving their short-term and long-term quality of life. Two instruments for assessing self-advocacy are proposed by the authors: the Self-Advocacy Questionnaire and Interview Protocol and the Self-Advocacy Behavioral Indicator. A proposed model for training, the Synthesized Model for Teaching Self-Advocacy, along with an example of implementation of the model may also be useful for practitioners.

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Appendix 11A

Figure 11.1. Self-advocacy questionnaire and interview protocol.

SELF-ADVOCACY QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Purpose: The purpose of the *Self-Advocacy Questionnaire and Interview Protocol* is to (a) assess client perceptions of self-advocacy, (b) determine need for self-advocacy training, (c) determine level of training and support needs, and (d) aid in collaborating with client toward developing a comprehensive plan for self-advocacy training.

Self-Advocacy Questionnaire – Instructions: Ask your client to indicate which choice best represents the client’s response to each of the 10 items below. Calculate a composite score based on the scoring key provided. Once the 10 items have been rated, ask your client the specific open-ended questions following the questionnaire as an aid to establishing a starting point for developing self-advocacy goals and implementing training.

<b>1. I admire people who can honestly tell others what they really think and feel.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>2. People should not need to ask for help; others should just want to help them.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>3. I feel like I am in control of my life in the way and to the extent I would like to be.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>4. I have a problem speaking-up for myself and letting people know what I need and want.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>5. Speaking-up for your self is a good thing.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>6. There are many things in my life that I cannot change.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>7. I admire people who are able to get things done.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

<b>8. I am reluctant to ask for help.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>9. I would like to be more assertive and speak up for myself.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>10. Asking others to help you is a sign of weakness.</b>				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Interview Protocol – Instructions: These questions are designed to serve as a semi-structured interview protocol. The questions are open-ended and in conjunction with the questionnaire may aid in establishing a starting point for developing self-advocacy goals and implementing training.

1. When do you find it most difficult to “speak up for yourself” and let other people know what you need and want? (Ask for at least two prime examples)
2. How do you feel when you have not spoken up for yourself and things do not go the way you hoped?
3. What do you imagine is the greatest barrier you face when it comes to speaking up for yourself?
4. If there was one area of your life where you would most like to speak up for yourself, what would it be?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being lowest & 10 being highest) how much would you like some help in learning to speak up for yourself?

Scoring Key: Circle the number in each row that represents the client’s response to each item.

Add up the numbers that are circled in each column to obtain the Column Totals. Calculate a Composite Score by adding the scores in the Column Totals.

<b>ITEM #</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NOT SURE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
1	4	3	2	1	0
2	0	1	2	3	4
3	4	3	2	1	0
4	0	1	2	3	4
5	4	3	2	1	0
6	0	1	2	3	4
7	4	3	2	1	0
8	0	1	2	3	4
9	4	3	2	1	0
10	0	1	2	3	4
<b>TOTALS</b>					
<b>COMPOSITE SCORE:</b>					

Composite Score – Interpretation: Below is a chart for Interpretation of composite score in the context of a grade, the amount of training needed, potential for benefit, and support needs.

<b>Range of Composite Score</b>	<b>Grade in Self-Advocacy</b>	<b>Amount of Training / Potential for Benefit / Support Needs</b>
36 – 40	A	Low / Moderate / Coaching
30 – 35	B	Moderate / High / Coaching & Monitoring
21- 30	C	High / High / Counseling & Monitoring
11 – 20	D	High / High / Counseling, Monitoring, & Coaching
0 – 10	F	High / Moderate / Long-term Counseling, Monitoring, & Coaching

Appendix 11B

Figure 11.2. Self-advocacy behavioral indicator.

SELF-ADVOCACY BEHAVIORAL INDICATOR

Purpose: The purpose of the Self-Advocacy Behavioral Indicator is to help determine areas where self-advocacy is most needed. Client responses to these questions can aid in determining particular domains in which self-advocacy may be targeted as part of a comprehensive self-advocacy plan.

Interview Protocol – Instructions: Ask your client to circle the most accurate response to each item. Then, review the responses with the client and fill-in any additional detailed comments or observations that may be useful in the development of a comprehensive plan.

<b>Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements ...</b>		
A-1. <i>I tell people what I need ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
A-2. <i>I ask loved ones for help with a problem ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
A-3. <i>I accept help from community social service programs ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
A-4. <i>I admit mistakes I have made ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		

A-5. <i>I can admit it when I'm facing a major life issue ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
<b>Rate your ability to <u>do</u> each of the following ...</b>		
B-1. <i>I can locate services that are available to me ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
B-2. <i>I can solve my problems on my own ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
B-3. <i>I can tell other people what I need ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
B-4. <i>I can speak up for myself ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		
B-5. <i>I can accept responsibility for my actions ...</i>	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:		

## Appendix 11C

*Figure 11.3.* Model for teaching self-advocacy.

### SYNTHESIZED MODEL FOR TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

Below is a model, developed by the authors from existing literature on self-advocacy, which proposes identifiable steps for teaching self-advocacy. Although presented as a linear model, it is not intended to be restrictive in determining when a particular element is most needed for a client.

#### Step 1: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION - Identify a specific problem

Advocacy must have a focus. Problem identification is a critical first step toward self-advocacy and empowerment (Moxley & Hyduk, 2003). Professionals in the human services fields can use this first step to help clients determine what they need or want. Often, clients initially give a broad overview of the issue and may not see the root cause of a problem. The use of basic counseling skills (e.g., building rapport, expressing empathy, probing, challenging, etc.) sets the stage for building trust and learning self-advocacy.

#### Step 2: OUTCOME ENVISIONING - Envision a specific outcome

Problem identification needs to occur in concert with outcome envisioning. Envisioning what the “problem solved” will look like is an important part of the planning process (O’Connell, 2005). Human service professionals can help clients better understand desirable and achievable outcomes for their problems. This can be accomplished as the helper guides a client through a process that begins with the end in mind, that is, that envisions the desired outcome (Covey, 1989).

### Step 3: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – Gather essential information

Gathering as much knowledge and understanding surrounding the problem and potential solutions lays an important foundation for advocacy. Clients may be able to identify the problem at hand, but may not know some critical information. For example, clients may need help identifying their strengths. Personal skills, attitudes, and paradigms comprise a wealth of information that will be critical to problem solving and self-advocacy. Additionally, clients need to know if there are any legalities that apply to their particular situation (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005).

### Step 4: RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT - Identify existing resources and develop new resources

Self-advocacy is not solely reliant upon “self”. Resources are an important part of a client’s environment that they may fail to fully recognize or utilize. Clients may not initially believe that they have the necessary resources available to them. However, discussing what friends and family may be able to offer can help them to see that they are not alone. Churches, social networks, and other organizations may also be valuable resources.

Once current resources are identified, helpers often need to assist a client in locating new resources. Referring clients to appropriate services is important to giving them power over their circumstances. Gehart and Lucus (2007) argue that helping a client through the system is a vital step beyond simple referral. The authors would like to suggest that role-play is an effective strategy for teaching self-advocacy. For example, a helper and client could jointly select appropriate referral sources from a list of community resources; then, after a brief role-play, the client, in the presence of the helper, could call and self refer, providing the helper with an opportunity to assess the process and follow-up with useful feedback.

#### Step 5: SKILLS ACQUISITION - Learning new skills

Once clients have identified current and new resources, they need to know how to approach these resources in a way that will lead to positive results. An important part of self-advocacy is knowing how to define your needs and then communicate them effectively to an individual or group that can help (Test et al., 2005). To do this, helpers need to teach effective communication skills to their clients. While some clients may be able to define their needs, they may not feel confident enough to articulate these needs to other people. Thus, assertiveness training is another skill that helpers can teach clients. Finally, allowing clients to practice role-playing what they will say to others will help them become more comfortable.

#### Step 6: ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS - Group advocacy as self-advocacy

One of the most empowering strategies for self-advocacy is interdependence. Interdependence is healthy mutual dependence, freely chosen by two or more parties, resulting in reciprocal synergistic outcomes. The combined efforts of those involved in a synergistic relationship results in an exponential outcome beyond what the two could achieve independently.

Once the client becomes comfortable with self-advocacy, working to advocate for a group with similar issues may take the client to the next level. By advocating with a group, an individual can become more empowered. The group then becomes another resource as well. Test et al. (2005) stated that advocating for an entire group allows the individual to act as a leader. Leadership skills that are derived from group self-advocacy efforts are transferrable to other situations in the client's life.

#### Step 7: FOLLOW-UP - Follow up/Assessment/Reengagement

Follow-up and post-assessment are important for continuous improvement. Assessment in this model should be conceptualized as more formative than summative since this type of

personal growth tends to be ongoing. Pre- and post-assessments such as the Perceptions of Self-Advocacy Questionnaire and the Self-Advocacy Behavioral Indicator may be utilized as a gauge for the development of self-advocacy. Once assessment is completed, fresh goals and reengagement are appropriate.

## Appendix 11D

*Figure 11.4.* An example of implementation – synthesized model for teaching self-advocacy

### AN EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTATION - SYNTHESIZED MODEL FOR TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

Scenario: John was recently laid off from his job at a local factory due to downsizing. He has two children and his wife does not work. Luckily, he and his wife have enough savings to get by for three months. After two months of searching for work, John comes to Judy, a career counselor, for assistance.

#### Step 1: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

At their first meeting, John and Judy discuss John's current situation. The primary problem is obvious: John needs to work in order to support his family. After talking in greater detail, Judy recognizes a related issue: vocationally, John defines himself strictly based on his previous job. Because there are no similar factories in the area, John feels he will be unable to procure employment in the immediate vicinity. In addition to not knowing how to apply his skills to any local jobs, John does not know how to market himself to employers. Judy administers the Self-Advocacy Questionnaire and Interview Protocol and determines that John could benefit greatly from training in self-advocacy.

#### Step 2: OUTCOME ENVISIONING

With Judy's help, John began to envision what a desirable vocational outcome might look like. He was able to expand his vision beyond that of what he was afforded with his previous employer. Envisioning new vocational possibilities energized and empowered John to move forward with hope toward a productive and meaningful future. John also began to envision himself as a self-advocate who can be proactive with potential employers.

### Step 3: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Initially, Judy helps John determine his vocational options by conducting an analysis of transferrable skills. Rather than defining himself as “a factory worker,” John quickly realizes that his job has resulted in him gaining a variety of skills. Together, they rewrite his resume to reflect his skill set. During this process, John becomes empowered as he discovers that, vocationally, he is not defined strictly by his former employer or employment, but rather by the unique set of skills that he possesses. He now defines himself vocationally in a much broader sense. Additionally, after he takes the Self-Advocacy Behavioral Indicator, John discovers some specific areas where he can become a more effective self-advocate.

### Step 4: RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Judy and John brainstorm a list of potential resources. John realizes that there is a network of resources that exist all around him (family, friends, social groups, church, etc.), which he never considered as relating to his career or potential employment. He also continues to utilize Judy as a resource for career development and training in self-advocacy.

### Step 5: ENGAGING WITH OTHERS

After identifying current resources, Judy and John discuss other possible resources in the community. Judy gives him information about the local employment agency. She also refers him to the Department of Human Resources so that he can apply for state services while he is still looking for work. Additionally, she refers him to a recently formed community support group for workers who have been laid-off. John, a religious person, begins to reflect more upon the direction of his life and what possible options fit well into his value system.

### Step 6: ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS

After meeting with John, Judy has the sense that John is shy and does not want to be seen as conceited. In interviews, he does not give the impression that he believes in himself, and he does not know how to sell himself to employers. Judy helps John practice his skills in self-advocacy and assertiveness. They practice by engaging in mock interviews and exploring a variety of scenarios. Judy also provides information about commonly asked interview questions, how to dress for an interview, common interview mistakes, etc.

As John became more comfortable with his new skills, he begins talking in the support group about interviewing techniques and teaching these skills to others. While it helps the group members, it also increases John's sense of self-efficacy.

### Step 7: FOLLOW-UP

John and Judy meet on a regular schedule to monitor how things are going. Judy re-administers the previous assessment instruments to measure and reinforce progress and guide the training process. These periodic assessments prove to be very helpful, and John is able to make decisions along the way regarding how to self-advocate and become more proactive in his life. Reassessment and skill building continue until John is successful in procuring desirable employment.

## CHAPTER 12

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### METAPHORICAL COMMUNICATION: A UNIVERSAL TOOL FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND FACILITATING CHANGE.

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*Authors' Note: The context from which the authors write is the counseling profession. Thus, many references and illustrations in this manuscript are associated with the field of counseling. In most instances the authors have chosen to use the term "helper" to generically refer to professional helpers (e.g. counselors, social workers, human services providers, caseworkers, etc.).*

#### Abstract

The employment of well-designed and strategically crafted metaphors in the field of human services represents one of the most powerful tools at a helper's or service provider's disposal. Metaphorical identification through stories and other creative and imaginative media may sow the seeds of therapeutic change. This chapter explores some of the best practices among helpers in the human services profession with regard to the various uses, forms, and strategic implementation of metaphorical communication. The foci of this chapter include (a) an

exploration of the dynamics and power of metaphors for facilitating communication and helping clients change, (b) suggestions and examples of how metaphors can be meaningfully fashioned to fit the personal needs of individual clients, and (c) examples of the effective use of both frozen and fresh metaphors. Specific guidelines are provided for the development of individualized, contextually sensitive, targeted metaphors to facilitate change.

## Introduction

Would you be interested in joining an exploratory team on a marvelous adventure? This will be an intentional journey meant to stretch our boundaries of understanding and increase our view of the world around us. Would you like to come along? We will be exploring a variety of paths leading to a better appreciation for the land of metaphor. The landscape will include interesting views of some places where you may not have set foot before. We will journey through some villages that are picturesque, expansive, even stunning. We will also take the time to excavate some particularly interesting topography that holds universal significance. We hope that you will enjoy our sojourn through metaphor and return refreshed, invigorated, and better prepared to introduce others to the powerful adventure that exists in metaphor.

The preceding paragraph is designed as a way of metaphorically introducing this chapter. It is an example of a metaphor used as a means of peaking interest, expanding imagination, and creating intrigue for a particular action - in this case, reading a chapter in a monograph. If you are like most people, the images and affect associated with the metaphor of *journey* and/or *exploration* are appealing. Throughout history, humans are known to relate closely to stories or *word pictures*, especially those in which they sense connection and identity (Taylor, 1989).

Culturally, socially, and individually humans use stories, one form of metaphorical communication, to both express and explain themselves. The use of metaphors by humankind is as old as the caveman who drew stories upon rock walls, and as new as the techno savvy American who watches YouTube. Cultures rely upon stories whether written, spoken, or illustrated. Jesus, among other great teachers, employed parables (stories) as a primary means of communication. Native American rituals, such as the Sweat Lodge Ceremony are replete with rich symbolic images, both spoken (words), envisioned, and felt (heat and steam). Today, stories

remain central to our culture and are evident in such modern modes of communication as Facebook, MobileMe, and Twitter. Arguably, we embody our stories, and it might even be said that “we are our stories, and our stories are us” (Stephens & Wesley, 2008, p. 12).

### **What is Metaphorical Communication?**

Metaphorical communication is a universal form of human interaction. Almost unknowingly, we utilize metaphors to facilitate and enrich communication in every area of our lives. *The American Heritage College Dictionary* (1993) refers to metaphor as a symbolic representation in which one thing is conceived to represent another. It may be expressed in a figure of speech denoting one word, phrase, type of object, or idea designating one thing, and applied to or used in place of another. The word metaphor in its Greek root is based on *metapherein*, meaning to transfer or carry, and is used in *metamorphosis*, meaning to transform or to bear or convey change. Romig and Gruenke (1991) discuss metaphor in terms of a nonliteral form of communication that tends to facilitate thought processes that are more imaginistic than literally verbal. It is perhaps this property that creates for clients a new understanding of a problem situation, which can extricate them from a binary, and perhaps linear perspective of problem solving. It has also been theorized that metaphorical communication “goes directly to the heart” because such images may be processed more in the right brain hemisphere, facilitating more unconscious and affective (emotional) awareness, preventing one from getting caught up in the more analytical processing of the left brain.

Metaphors have been shown to be powerful mechanisms for promoting change (Bowman, 1992; Cirillo & Crider, 1995; Lawley & Thompkins, 2000). In particular, counselors and other human services professionals have demonstrated intentional and effective use of metaphors in helping clients gain personal insight and implement new directions in their lives

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Researchers have found that clients use metaphors pervasively and that the interpretation of these metaphors is highly dependent upon context (Kopp, 1998; Wickman, Daniels, White, & Fesmire, 1999). In the counseling profession metaphors are widely used in narrative therapy in particular, which is based on the core concept that clients write (fashion) and may even rewrite (reframe) their own lives (stories).

### **Classification of Metaphors**

Conceptualizing metaphorical communication is inherently a cross-disciplinary enterprise, incorporating philosophy, linguistics, communication theory, as well as psychology. Consequently, metaphors are classified according to a variety of different criteria and are typically contextualized in terms of the perspective of the genre or the discipline. According to Lawley and Tomkins (2000), metaphors pertinent to the helping professions include the novel or fresh metaphor, the frozen or dead metaphor, and the dying metaphor, in addition to explicit and implicit metaphors. Frozen metaphors are those that are somewhat familiar or have been used over time by others to apply to numerous situations. In contrast, fresh metaphors are original and designated to apply to a specific person and that person's problem situation. For the purpose of this manuscript the authors shall focus on (a) how to revive or activate frozen metaphors by making them fresh for a client, and (b) how to create fresh metaphors that are novel and specific for a client and the unique situation.

Before exploring how metaphors can be integrated and utilized in the process of helping, it is worth asking, what constitutes *metaphorical communication*? The dictionary defines communication as a two-way process whereby information, thoughts, or feelings are transmitted in such a way that messages are satisfactorily received and understood. A successful exchange of information between persons would seem to be a relatively simple transaction, yet human

services professionals are all too familiar with the distressing aftermath of communication gone awry. Far too often, communication is fraught with misunderstanding and misinterpretation, as evidenced by the familiar refrain, “it’s not what she said, but how she said it.” Indeed, tone of voice is only one of many factors, apart from the actual words spoken, that impede successful communication. Non-verbal behavior, cultural differences, preexisting attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions are all potentially problematic areas of communication.

Sheldon Kopp (1998) defined a metaphor as “a way of speaking in which one thing is expressed in terms of another, whereby this bringing together throws new light on the character of what is being described” (p. 17). The root term from which metaphor has evolved clearly references metaphor as transferring or transmitting meaning by employing universal symbols. Taken together, metaphor refers to the exchange of meaning by deploying symbols such as words, phrases, stories, etc. beyond the mere exchange of words. Because clients often use metaphors to convey subjective experience and to express emotionally charged content (Kopp, 1998), it is reasonable to hypothesize that the transmission of information via rich symbols is more likely to result in a meaningful and therapeutic relationship. A part of the power of metaphorical communication is predicated upon a common language that facilitates a connection between client and counselor transcending mere words and allowing the client to “re-story” his or her narrative (Cowan, 2005).

Wickman et al. (1999) propose that human expression via metaphor is complex. Metaphorical language is actually a conduit whereby humans are able to experience the physical “here and now” of unfolding events while simultaneously tapping into the prior emotional experiences associated with present events. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) described this ongoing referencing between remembered events or abstraction and the presently felt bodily experience

as a *conceptual metaphor*. While the helping professions have a long history of using metaphor and symbols in a variety of ways, Wickman et al. (1999) maintain that the intentional use of conceptual metaphor for structuring interventions that target clients' individual thinking patterns has been greatly underutilized.

Metaphorical communication is often initiated by the client early in the counseling relationship when the client is describing the circumstances that precipitated coming for help. For example, a client may express worry and frustration about being "shut out of her life," "backed into a corner," or even feeling "like I'm in prison." A second variation of client-generated metaphor is one that uniquely expresses some aspect of the client's cultural background. For example, Native Americans tend to express themselves in metaphorical stories (Kincade & Evans, 1996). Counselor sensitivity to client-generated metaphors serves the dual purpose of conveying understanding and contributing to the development of a common language (Schoo, 2009).

Helper-generated metaphors are predicated upon highly developed listening and attending skills. According to Gladding (2005), successful counselors employ a procedure called *minesis*, which is the ability to listen to and use the language of clients. Lyddon, Clay, and Sparks (2001) propose that metaphors play a major role in at least five developmental change processes in counseling: (a) building relationships, (b) accessing and symbolizing emotions, (c) uncovering and challenging clients' tacit and unrealistic assumptions, (d) working with client resistance, and (e) introducing new frames of reference.

The distinguishing feature of metaphorical communication is the deliberate and intentional use of metaphor as a therapeutic intervention. By injecting appropriate and well-chosen metaphors, helpers can join more quickly with clients to develop a collaborative

relationship within which to explore and expand the client's present experience. A well conceived metaphor may become what Markova (1994) called "a secret password" that begins to chip away the isolation of hurt and expand the client's vision of possible options previously unseen (p. 161). Metaphorical communication is also economical in the sense that it may take only one or a few words to convey a universal image, leaping straight to the heart of one's understanding.

### **Why Use Metaphorical Communication?**

For many individuals the ability to "rationalize" makes it difficult to understand and embrace difficulties in a way that allows for productive problem solving. Human services professionals need to be able to implement more effective techniques to enable clients to recognize and resolve their difficulties. Metaphor is an effective tool for helping clients both recognize and solve problems in new ways. Metaphors are also useful for promoting personal and cultural identification, providing a greater sense of meaningful connection, facilitating therapeutic interactions, and providing a pathway toward greater self-understanding (Lichtenberg, 2009).

Numerous authors have referred to the advantages of using metaphorical communication as a therapeutic intervention (Cirillo & Crider, 1995; Gladding, 2005). If employed judiciously, metaphorical intervention deepens and enhances the counseling experience, quickly builds rapport, and contributes to the formation of a collaborative relationship between client and helping professional (Wickman, et al., 1999). Wickman et.al add that the use of metaphor within the therapeutic relationship enhances empathic understanding because it aids in efficiently grasping, understanding, and conceptualizing the essence of a problem.

Tompkins, Sullivan, and Lawley (2005) suggested that we can draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we consciously and unconsciously structure our experiences via metaphor. Metaphorical communication offers an opportunity to bring unconscious beliefs to the surface thereby leading the client to a greater level of self-awareness. Furthermore, metaphorical communication is advantageous because it is transtheoretical and can easily integrate with a variety of theoretical perspectives (Gladding, 2005). Gladding also highlights the value of metaphorical communication because of its potential to inject a sense of playfulness into challenging situations, often sparking imaginative thinking.

### **When is Metaphorical Communication Least Effective?**

Metaphors are least helpful under at least two conditions: (a) when the helper is unskilled in their use, and (b) when the client's situation is one in which metaphor is least likely to be useful or practical.

In the first instance, though somewhat rare in the helping professions, a helper may lack the creative thinking and imaginative agility necessary to innovate or implement a fresh metaphor. A more likely case is that of helper error, in which one is too quick to interject one's interpretation of a specific metaphor and thus detracts from the potential richness and/or full application of a metaphor. This is not to say that helpers should not participate in the process of proposing possible interpretations and expansions of a metaphor. Rather, one must be cautious not to limit the interpretation and expansion by a client in a way that is most meaningful. Helpers often report being amazed at how rich, expansive, and applicable a client's interpretation of a metaphor is.

Professional judgment is paramount when determining the appropriate use of any intervention, and metaphorical communication is no exception. Some examples of when metaphorical intervention is contraindicated are when a client is disoriented, physically ill, or cognitively impaired. The client's cognitive ability to recognize and grasp the meaning of a counselor-generated metaphor must be intact or the intervention will fail. A second example of inappropriate use of a metaphorical intervention may be when a client is distraught, in crisis, or otherwise in need of a clear and attentive suicide risk assessment. Finally, common sense dictates that utilizing too many metaphors will cause the intervention to become trite and overdone, thereby diminishing any therapeutic value.

### **How Does Metaphorical Communication Work?**

Because metaphors have proven to be a powerful tool for helping individuals gain insight and understanding of complex and difficult situations, they can be a highly effective mechanism for generating motivation and instigating change (Lichtenberg, 2009). So, exactly how do metaphors work? Although the literature is inconclusive on the exact physiological and biological processes involved, there is evidence, gathered through observation, regarding how metaphors affect human beings.

Introducing a metaphor as a therapeutic device is comparable to inviting a client on a journey of creativity and discovery. McKee et al. (2003) believe that the power of a metaphorical intervention is ultimately realized by the resolution of two incongruent ideas, stories, perceptions, etc. Because the brain's natural response to cognitive dissonance is an effort to restore equilibrium, clients are naturally inclined toward contrasting and synthesizing signals in such a way as to resolve disparity. In other words, the client finds a way to break free of the confinement of the existing story and revise the story to accommodate a larger perspective.

Lichtenberg (2009) adds what he terms the *emergent metaphoric experience*, which he describes as an interaction between client and helper in which a metaphor (word, phrase, image, story, etc.) taps into previously expressed client emotions resulting in a breakthrough for moving forward.

It is important to note that individuals exhibit particular preferences or styles when it comes to communication. During the process of telling their stories, clients often reveal their primary preference or mode for processing information (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, smell, taste, etc.) Helpers who pick up on a client's preferred context for communication have the opportunity to tailor feedback using the client's preferential mode of sensory input. A response designed specifically to match an individual's exhibited sensory preferences is consistent with Gardner's (1993) appeal for teaching by targeting people's greater intelligences. Additionally, this approach is not unrelated to what has been written in the area of neuro-linguistic programming, which has the goal of helping to connect communication patterns with underlying thoughts and behavior to facilitate change (Bandler, 1985).

Clients provide many clues to their preferred style of communication. By listening closely, helpers can informally assess communication style, noting common expressions that denote sensory preferences. For example,

- Visual: "I see what you mean" or "Can you see why I'm so angry?"
- Auditory: "Now you're talking" or "If you can help me, I'm all ears."
- Kinesthetic: "She's creepy" or "He gives me the hee-bee-gee-bees."
- Olfactory: "It stinks" or "I could smell trouble a mile away."
- Taste: "It left a bad taste in my mouth" or "I was so upset I could taste it."

Lawley & Tompkins (2000) contend that the idiosyncratic way individuals use metaphors and symbols can reveal people's personal histories, spiritual natures, and the unknown and

hidden aspects of their lives. They also refer to David Grove's (1989) technique of *symbolic modeling*, developed in the 1980s, which offers a clinical method for resolving traumatic memories such as those associated with child abuse, rape, and incest. By asking very simple questions using the client's exact words as a mirror, Grove discovered that clients' perception of the trauma began to change. Consequently, Grove created what he described as *clean language* to facilitate clients' discovery of how their metaphors express their way of being and evolving in the world. Clean language is unique in that the helping professional responds to a client-generated metaphor by asking questions *of the metaphor*, rather than of the client, and without any reference to the counselor. Thus, it is important for helpers to assist clients with focusing on, developing, and interpreting metaphors in a way that is particularly meaningful to them.

Strong (1989) suggests at least three strategies for a counselor's response to a client-generated metaphor: (a) explicate what is implicit, (b) therapeutically extend or modify the metaphor, and (c) create and deliver another metaphor. To explicate what is implicit is a particularly important part of the counseling process because it both reduces misunderstandings which could arise and substantiates that a common metaphor may now be used to represent specific thoughts, feelings, or understandings related to the client's problem situation. Extending and modifying allows the helper to engage with the client within their own metaphoric structure, while providing an opportunity to expand the potential meaning. Creating an additional metaphor may extricate new meanings that modify the client's conceptualization and understanding of the problem-situation.

There are several characteristics of effective metaphorical communication. Some of the more common characteristics include (a) being "lite" and unobtrusive, and confronting indirectly; (b) connecting with client's value system; (c) being structurally similar to the

presenting problem; (d) resonating with the client’s inner experience and goals; and (e) creating fresh and rich frames of reference (Stephens & Wesley, 2008). Metaphors are also recognized for being efficient, embraceable, and stimulating.

### Metaphorical Communication for Change – Some Examples

Every culture and society contains rich histories and traditions involving metaphors, many of which Pascal (1992) refers to as symbols of transformation. Our personal and collective unconscious appear to embody deep connections to metaphorical expression and meaning. Consequently, whether frozen or fresh, for many clients metaphors contain seeds for change.

Even frozen metaphors in the form of brief familiar or unfamiliar *sayings* (quotations), when applied to the right person at the right time, can be effective. A few examples of metaphors in the form of *one-liners* that relate to common client themes are shown in Figure 12.1 (Stephens & Wesley, 2008, p. 23).

Theme	Quotation
Being Proactive	<p>“You cannot control the wind, but you can adjust your sail.”</p> <p>“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” [Basketball, Hockey, etc.]</p>
Perspective in Difficult Times	<p>“It is only in the darkness that one can see the stars clearly enough to chart one’s course.”</p>
Over Dependence	<p>“At times a necklace can begin to look and feel like a dog collar.”</p>
Living in the Moment	<p>“The remedy for dirt is soap and water; the remedy for dying is living.”</p>
Planning Ahead	<p>“I don’t skate to where the puck is, but where the puck will be.”</p> <p>[Hockey]</p>
Risk Taking	<p>“Ships are safe in a harbor; but that’s not what ships are for.”</p>

Figure 12.1. Frozen metaphors - one-liners representing common client themes.

Frozen metaphors, in the form of stories or word pictures that are well-timed and well presented can be very effective. A few examples of short story forms of frozen metaphors that relate to common client themes are presented in Figure 12.2 (Stephens & Wesley, 2008, p. 22).

As an illustration of how broad and existential a metaphor can be, Schoo (2009) provides a picture of one's life represented by the image of a book in a library. The metaphor reads like this:

There are different categories of books. Each book is indexed and can be found in its designated section of the library. Each person that lives represents an unwritten book that is destined to fill one of the shelves eventually. Each book that is completed tells facts and stories that may assist others in reaching their potential. Each chapter in the book reflects a particular phase in life with its options, challenges and achievements. Each word reflects an emotion, an experience, or an activity that made an impression.

It is possible that we have been programmed to fill a particular type of book, for example, with science fiction, art, romance, history, or science. However, it is up to us to determine if its contents are uplifting or sad, exciting or dull, successful or unsuccessful, the history of used options or failed opportunities, resilience or defeat. It is up to us to keep writing positive experiences in the book, experiences that are based on the lessons we have learned, and experiences that can be an example for others. (pp. 12-13)

The authors suspect that many helpers and their clients may easily relate to this "life as a book" metaphor and therefore it may serve as an example of a frozen, yet effective metaphor. In addition, one author, as a counselor, could not help but want to expand this metaphor to suggest that perhaps the client/counselor relationship is parallel (in a narrative therapy model) to writer/editor in that the two work together in the process of chapter development. Jointly

Title	Theme	Description of Storyline
Spring Cleaning	Letting Go / Cleaning-up Your Act	Suggestion that <i>cleaning up</i> or <i>straightening-up</i> our lives is not unlike <i>spring cleaning</i> one's home. It may involve taking out the garbage, sorting out one room at a time, purging closets of unwanted/unneeded items (e.g. unused items, clothing that no longer fits, etc.), and making room for useful items that are of greater interest or a better fit for one's needs and interest.
Dashboard Warning Lights	Denial / Refusing to Change	What is a rational response to the appearance of a flashing red warning light on the dash? What might be the consequences if you ignore the light, cover-up the light, unplug the light, or heed the warning and stop to get help? Contemplate likely outcomes of each response. What strategy do you choose?
Monkey, Gourd, & Peanuts	Being Stuck / Letting Go	This is a story about how easily monkeys can be captured in the wild. The small tip of a gourd is cut off leaving a tiny opening. The large end is tied to a tree limb and the gourd is placed on the ground. Peanuts are placed inside the large end, attracting a monkey who contracts his hand reaching in to grab a fist full of peanuts at the large end. Because the monkey refuses to release the peanuts in his grasp, he is captured. Thus for the sake of a handful of peanuts he will either be taken by his captor or starve grasping the peanuts. He sacrifices everything for the peanuts.
Pike Fish	Consequences of Bad Habits / Refusing to Change	A pike fish placed in a tank full of water naturally eats minnows that are swimming in the vicinity. Once the minnows are isolated in a glass container, within the tank, the pike fish stubs its mouth and nose on the glass upon approach and eventually stops pursuing the minnows. After a while, the glass container is removed, and the minnows swim freely around the pike fish, but the pike never approaches the minnows for food and eventually dies of starvation despite the abundance of minnows.

Figure 12.2. Frozen metaphors – stories or word pictures representing common client themes

developing a clients' narrative may involve such processes as negotiating the specific wording (reframing), debating the accuracy of content (challenging), reviewing previous chapters to link them appropriately with the current chapter (psychoanalysis), and even envisioning (via goal setting and planning) the end of the story. As illustrated by the preceding example, frozen metaphors may be expanded, enriched, and revised in such a way that they evolve into fresh metaphors from the perspective of a client.

Fresh metaphors are those that are uniquely devised by the helper and/or the client to accommodate a specific problem situation. One of the most powerful examples of a fresh metaphor can be found in Elizabeth Gilbert's (2006) portrayal of loneliness and depression as she journeys through Italy in her book *Eat, Pray, Love*. Gilbert portrays loneliness and depression as collaborating and menacing "Pinkerton Detectives" whom she knows well because they have been "playing a cat-and-mouse game" with her for years (pp. 46-47). She describes in vivid detail how depression confiscates her identity and loneliness interrogates her. She notes at the end of the day how loneliness "climbs into my bed and pulls the covers up over himself, fully dressed, shoes and all. He's going to make me sleep with him again tonight, I just know it" (p. 48). Gilbert's ability to speak vividly and colorfully in metaphors throughout her book is undoubtedly a significant factor in the success of her bestseller.

Perhaps an illustration of both a frozen and fresh metaphor focusing on the same issue can be helpful. The authors note that one common problem for clients is a lack of "self-care". This is an area where many clients get themselves into trouble by focusing only on those around them and not caring adequately for themselves. People often fail to understand the relationship between self-care and being more effective in helping those around them.

One author's favorite use of frozen metaphor related to self-care is referencing a portion of the instructions provided by flight attendants prior to airplane liftoff. Most clients, whether they have heard it before or are hearing it for the first time, are a bit surprised to be reminded that the instructions go something like this: "In the case of an emergency, should the plane lose cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop down in front of you. If you are sitting next to a child, or someone who needs assistance, be sure to first secure your oxygen mask on yourself before attempting to help the other person." After presenting this metaphor a helper may do well to allow a pregnant pause for the client to contemplate and fully absorb related implications. Rather than following such a metaphor with a "lecture," it is often most effective to wait to hear the client's interpretation and application, or simply ask, "How might that apply to your situation?"

Continuing with the theme of self-care, what follows is an original metaphor fashioned for a client by a caseworker. Bowman (1992) describes his experiences working with an older client with multiple health issues who failed to embrace her need for self-care. He notes that Mrs. G. (as he refers to her), who was 86 years old, was still going strong in spite of polio, cancer, chemotherapy, and recent legal blindness. She was a recent widow after 60 years of marriage, and had raised eight foster children. She used a wheelchair and lived alone in a rural area. The problem was that she drove herself too hard, failed to pace herself, and ended up in the hospital on several occasions from exhaustion related to post-polio syndrome. Mrs. G would also berate herself, referring to her body as *a piece of junk*.

Bowman describes discussing things Mrs. G valued, such as the fact that, in the country, people always help one another out, and how important it is to be a friend, as well as to help a friend. Bowman supported her belief in the importance of friendship and support, and noted that when she had some hard struggles in life, friends had been there to help her, just as she had been

there for them. Then he shocked her by noting that it was unfortunate that *she had been ignoring the friend she had known the longest*. She sat up straight in her wheelchair with a stunned look on her face as he went on to emphasize that this lifelong friend who now needed help was being ignored by her. Mrs. G assured him that she would never do such a thing and demanded to know who this friend was. Then, Bowman calmly reminded her that this lifelong friend was *her body*; a friend that had stuck with her through thick and thin.

Bowman emphasized that even though her friend had been crippled with polio, she had given 86 years of miraculous service. This friend allowed her to experience 60 years of good marriage to her childhood sweetheart and helped successfully raise eight foster children. *She* had helped her stay in her home all these years and remain independent when friends younger than her were either in nursing homes or in the cemetery. He noted that, now that this friend who had fought by her side all these years had begun to lose some energy, *she needed help and understanding*. Bowman then ended the conversation by asking if she would help her. Mrs. G said she had never thought of her body in those terms before and vowed to do better. On a subsequent visit, she proudly acknowledged she and her friend were now working closely together. This powerful metaphor was created by identifying a deeply held personal value (people helping people) and creating a scenario of how the valued context (friendship) and the problem attitude (*junk body*) could fit together toward addressing the larger issue (self-care).

### **How to Fashion Fresh Metaphorical Communication to Help People Change**

To become more effective helpers it is important to understand the basic elements that comprise the formation of effective metaphorical communication. Metaphors should always be fashioned with a client's best interest in mind, and should be goal oriented and congruent with client values (Stephens & Wesley, 2008). Metaphors should be designed to resonate with the

inner experience of the client and create fresh and rich frames of reference capable of promoting problem clarification, insight, and problem-solving strategies.

Some important considerations when fashioning “personalized metaphors” include the following (Stephens & Wesley, 2008):

- Possessing a cultural understanding of the client’s world;
- Understanding the current context in which the client operates;
- Having an accurate understanding of the nature of the clients dilemma/problem;
- Connecting to the client’s primary “language” (verbal and non-verbal) and sensory linguistic preferences;
- Acquiring a clear and specific understanding of client goals.

Additionally, from a process standpoint, there are other considerations to keep in mind. It is important that helpers insure that metaphorical communication is (Stephens & Wesley, 2008)

- Well conceived, with strong “connectivity” to client context and the problem situation;
- Well focused, targeting specific goals and processes;
- Well timed, within and among the scope of overall interactions;
- Well throttled, with the power level well gauged to client readiness;
- Focused on the well being of the client rather than executing a flashy technique.

Lastly, it is worth emphasizing that the interpretation and application of metaphor is contingent upon the client. Helpers should be careful to leave the initial interpretation open to a client’s creative imagination. As Lakoff (1993) noted, “the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another” (p.203).

Ultimately, it is important for a helper and client to come to some mutual understanding of what

the interpretation and application of a metaphor will be, but the process for reaching that point should be an open and creative one.

### **Summary**

Human services professionals can enhance their ability to help clients meet their goals by infusing appropriate forms of metaphorical communication (words, phrases, stories, poems, lyrics, etc.) into their interactions. Metaphorical communication is most effective when it is intentional (goal orientated), fresh (original in interpretations and/or application), consistent with a client's communication style/preferences, congruent with client culture and context, and targeted (intentionally designed to address a particular issue or problem). With conscious awareness and practice, helpers in the human services professions can become more effective in assisting their clients in making appropriate changes through the judicious use of metaphorical communication.

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## CHAPTER 13

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### APPROACHING CHILDREN'S FEARS THROUGH BIBLIOTHERAPY: A CLASSROOM-BASED INTERVENTION

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#### Abstract

There are many studies that highlight the therapeutic efficacy of bibliotherapy on children. However, research regarding the efficacy of bibliotherapy used by teachers in a classroom setting is very limited. The purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of bibliotherapy as a method for helping primary school children confront certain fears. We focused on the developmental aspects of bibliotherapy, because of the role a supportive school environment plays in children's growth, and designed and implemented a study with the aim of examining the efficacy of this method in the treatment of prevalent fears (death and darkness fears) among 3<sup>rd</sup> grade primary school children. We incorporated developmental bibliotherapy into the literature lesson by selecting texts describing characters facing relevant fears. Our method was based on Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory and the three well-known stages of bibliotherapeutic process: identification, catharsis and insight. We discuss results in terms of their application to classroom settings. Although the results cannot be generalized, they suggest an interesting line of research for future investigation.

## **Introduction**

“Not only does everyone fear, but all should fear. The pedagogic problem is not to eliminate fear, but to gauge it to the power of proper reaction,” asserted G. Stanley Hall (1897) over 100 years ago (as cited in Robinson, Rotter, Fey, & Robinson, 1991, p. 187). For children, fear is an integral part of their lives and, as such, a part of their normal development (Robinson et al., 1991, p. 187). Even if the goal is not the elimination of fear but the development of coping strategies, children in this process need their parents’ as well as their teachers’ support, especially if we would agree that educational practices can no longer aim only at student’s academic knowledge but must also help children acquire social, emotional, and life skills. One of the ways classroom teachers can help students to deal with fears is through bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is the guided reading of written materials in order to promote personal growth and development and to help people of any age gain understanding or cope with problems. Many different goals may be achieved through bibliotherapy, but the most important include (a) the development of an individual's self-concept, (b) the facilitation of self-actualization and self-esteem, (c) satisfying personal and social adjustments and exploration of new ways of interacting, (d) relief from emotional or mental pressure, (e) the development of insight into one’s problems, and (f) assistance and guidance in the solution of personal (emotional or other) problems (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986; Riordan & Wilson, 1989; Borders & Paisley, 1992; Pardeck, 1998).

Bibliotherapy can be clinical/remedial, that is, practiced by therapists, or preventive/developmental, meaning practiced by teachers and/or librarians to help individuals’ development (Halsted, 1988). Interactive bibliotherapy emphasizes a method in which the educator or other professional facilitates participants’ involvement to help them reflect on what

they read through written materials, guided dialogue about the material, and follow-up techniques (such as role-playing, creative problem solving, relaxation with music, and art activities) (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986; Morawski & Gilbert, 2000).

This paper is focused on developmental, interactive bibliotherapy, defined here as an attempt "to anticipate and meet needs before they become problems, helping people to move through life's predictable stages with information about what to expect and examples of how other people have dealt with the same developmental changes" (Halsted, 1988, p. 59). This form of bibliotherapy is more appropriate for a classroom.

There are many potential reasons a teacher may choose to use bibliotherapy with students. These include (a) to show children they are not the only ones in a situation similar to their own; (b) to show children alternative solutions to their problems; (c) to help children open up and talk about their problems without inhibition; (d) to help children strategize effective plans to solve their problems; (e) to build up a child's self-concept; (f) to alleviate mental or emotional pressure a child may be facing; (g) to promote honest self-appraisal in a child; (h) to present the child with a way to discover different interests he/she may not have encountered otherwise; and (i) to amplify a child's understanding of human behaviors, motives, and actions (Aix, 1993). In any case, bibliotherapy can be a useful tool for stimulating discussion about a problem which otherwise may not be discussed because of fear, guilt, or shame (Pardeck, 1998). In this process, a child first identifies with a book character experiencing a problem similar to his/her own and projects onto the character all negative thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. The child then experiences an emotional release that is expressed in various ways (verbal and non-verbal) through abreaction and catharsis. Finally, the child gains insight into solutions by applying the character's coping strategies to his/her own problems (Rubin, 1978; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984).

Literature has generally supported the benefits of bibliotherapy for a wide range of problems, including abuse (Pardeck, 1990), anxiety (Register, Beckham, May, & Gustafsch, 1991), aggression (Shechtman, 1999), and bullying (Oliver & Young, 1994). Nevertheless, there have been relatively few empirically based studies on the effectiveness of this procedure, and, what is more, the results of existing research studies are mixed. Marrs (1995), using meta-analysis to examine the efficacy of bibliotherapy, stated that bibliotherapy appears more effective for certain problem types (assertiveness training, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction) than for others (weight loss, impulse control, and studying problems), and concluded that his analysis “provides some limited evidence for the effectiveness of bibliotherapy” (p. 865). Riordan and Wilson (1989), after reviewing the literature, found that, regardless of growing interest in bibliotherapy, most studies show mixed results for its effectiveness. They concluded that it is best used as an adjunctive therapy. Several years later, researchers Johnson, Wann, Templeton, Graham, and Sattler (2000) and Wolpow and Askov (2001) also questioned the efficacy of bibliotherapy, asserting that the research on bibliotherapy appears insufficient. The use of fiction, as opposed to factual or self-help books, for therapeutic purposes, remains essentially invalidated, as research shows a range of results from a general ineffectiveness to positively successful improvement (Jones, 2001, p. 16).

As for the effectiveness of bibliotherapy to help children cope with fears, research in this area is limited, most probably because bibliotherapy is not used systematically as a separate technique. Schrank and Engels (1981) reviewed the use of bibliotherapy as a counseling adjunct. After conducting an extensive review of the literature, they reported that the research gave “mixed support” on the question of fear reduction. Although there is a need for additional research, other studies showed promising results. Mikulas, Coffman, Dayton, Frayne, and Maier

(1985), after conducting four experiments using a children's storybook and related games designed to help children overcome fear of the dark, concluded that the procedure was therapeutic and enjoyable. Newhouse (1987) conducted a study in order to determine the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in reducing generalized fear in second-grade children. His results supported the hypothesis that fear would be reduced through bibliotherapy, with the conditions of a good research design and maximization of the treatment over an extended period of time. Klingman (1988) examined symbolic modeling in the form of stories with respect to its effectiveness in reducing kindergartners' fear of dark. Findings are viewed as preliminary, but the results showed that children who heard and discussed stories that dealt positively with the dark presented a significant reduction in fear of the dark compared to the control group's children who heard neutral stories irrelevant to fear of the dark.

Burke, Kuhn, and Peterson (2004) found evidence that the use of a social story ("The Sleep Fairy"), that specifies and reinforces appropriate bedtime and night time behavior, produced a substantial reduction in disruptive bedtime behavior and night waking for the four children (aged 2-7 years) in their study. Santacruz, Mendez, and Sanchez-Meca (2006) conducted research with 78 children with darkness phobia between the ages of four and eight. Their study included a five-week training during which children's parents applied two play therapies (bibliotherapy and games and emotive performances). Children who participated in the training achieved a significant decrease in darkness phobia compared to the control group. Fear of death and fears leading to school avoidance were addressed by research examining the use of bibliotherapy by school psychologists as a counseling aid for special groups of children (such as bereaved pupils; see Jones, 2001), but not as a preventive method used by teachers in classroom settings.

Taking into account that there is limited research regarding the efficacy of bibliotherapy used by teachers in the classroom, the aim of our study is to examine the efficacy of bibliotherapy as a method for helping primary school children confront certain fears.

### **Method**

The sample consisted of 16 children drawn from a third grade classroom of a middle-sized primary school in central Greece. It included seven girls and nine boys, ranging in age from 8 to 9 years.

All children completed a five-item questionnaire designed to assess their prevalent fears. The questionnaire was based mainly on fears children usually experience at this age, fears which were also presented in stories included in the third grade literature textbook. The first item presented a photo of a child lying in bed unable to sleep because he was obviously afraid of dark, and the second showed an elephant who was afraid of mice. In both cases children were asked to state whether they would fear the same situations and indicated how often this would happen on a scale of 1 to 3 (rarely/never – sometimes – very often). If they stated that they are afraid of animals “sometimes” or “very often,” they were also asked to state which animals they fear. Responses on the third item, which referred to children’s attempt to avoid certain school activities, were also scored on a scale of 1 to 3, and children gave their reasons for school avoidance. The fourth item presented a short story concerning a serious accident of “Mr. Manolis” and assessed on a scale of 1 to 3 children’s fear of death/injuries. The fifth asked them to rate the fears presented in the questionnaire on a scale of 1 to 5 and state whether they fear something else not mentioned in the questionnaire.

A drawing task was also used to assess participants’ fears because it is well documented that drawings provide children the sense of safety they need to express their feelings freely. The

drawing task was administered as a classroom assignment. Students were given a plain white A4 paper, a pencil, and an eraser. They were given the following instructions: “Draw a scene of a kid in a fearful situation. If you include yourself in the scene, please mark yourself with an arrow or a little cross.”

Data was collected by the same questionnaire and drawing task before the use of bibliotherapy and immediately after, in order to compare the initial and the final fears of the sample.

Developmental bibliotherapy was incorporated into the literature lesson. This approach was thought to be the best way to teach children reliable fear management techniques in the most subtle and nonthreatening way. Based on both children’s answers on the questionnaire and depicted fears, two stories from the third grade literature textbook were selected: “The Fall of Freddie the Leaf” written by Leo Buscaglia (Katsiki-Gkivalou, Papdatos, Patsiou, Politis, & Pilarinos, 2007, p. 12-14) and “Katerina and the Invisible One” written by Maro Loizou (Katsiki-Gkivalou et al., 2007, p. 132-134). The first one was used to address children’s fear of death and bodily injuries and the second for fear of the dark and ghosts.

Our method was based on Rosenblatt’s (1978) transactional theory and the three well-known stages of bibliotherapeutic process: identification, catharsis, and insight. Our specific aims were to help students identify their feelings in the hero/heroine of the story, de-escalate the emotional tension that they were feeling, and, eventually, think of solutions that would help them face their own fears. The intervention consisted of six 45-minute instructive hours during which children read the story and participated in group activities such as role playing, discussions, brain-storming, etc. The interventions were aimed at (a) showing children that they are not the first to encounter such fears and that there is more than one way to cope, (b) helping them

discuss their fears more freely and plan a constructive course of action, (c) helping them to see similarities between the literature and their own lives, (d) relieving emotional pressure, (e) allowing children to experience insight about and empathy for the characters in the stories, (f) fostering their self-appraisal, and (g) increasing their understanding of human behaviour and motivation. Follow-up activities were designed (a) to recall the main story line; (b) to target character, feelings, values, and attitudes; (c) to help children understand how the main character dealt with the problem; (d) to explore the similarities between the students' fears and those facing the characters in the stories; and (e) to evaluate the solutions selected and suggest alternative solutions to problems as needed.

### **Results**

Regarding fear of death and bodily injuries, in the beginning of the class most children expressed pessimistic opinions about the imminent death of the hero (a leaf named Freddie). Comments included "...he would fall from the tree and people would tread upon him" and "...during the winter Freddie would be frozen..." Students expressed sadness about autumn and winter with statements such as "the weather is bad" and "the trees are bare." However, thanks to the end of the story, which presented the contribution of the hero's death to nature's rebirth, the children started de-escalating their emotional tension.

This change is affirmed by their answers during an activity in which they had to express their feelings about this series of events. As Figure 13.1 illustrates, almost two-thirds of the students stated that they had positive feelings about Freddie's death (specifically, five of them said that they felt joy and five others alleged that they liked it). In addition, we should emphasize that only one student stated that he did not feel anything about Freddie's death, which demonstrates that most children felt empathy for the hero.

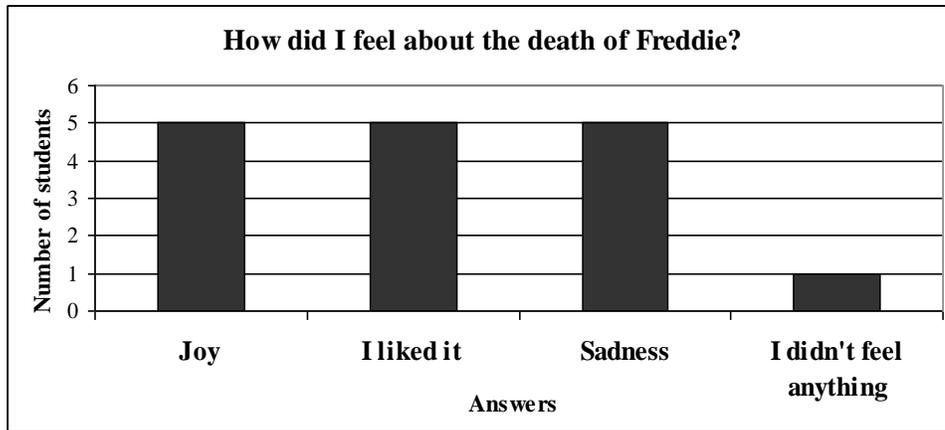


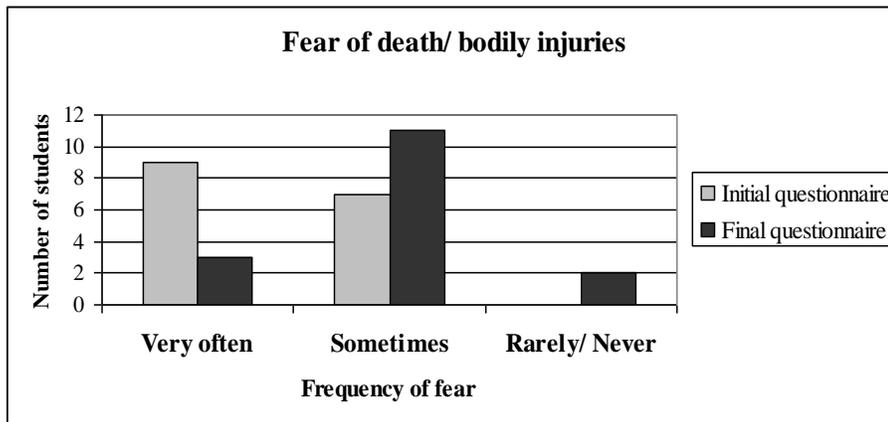
Figure 13.1. Students' emotions about the hero's death.

Children justified their positive emotions about the hero's death during another activity, in which they had to express what this fact meant to them. Once again thanks to the end of the story, children stated that Freddie's death means that "...new leaves would grow..." and that "...life would be rebuilt..." So, it becomes obvious that students interpreted death as a normal part of the life cycle. Moreover, their positive attitude attests to a successful experience of catharsis.

In addition, at the close of the lesson, during a dramatization activity, the children not only refrained from expressing pessimistic opinions about Freddie's death, but they were also able to think of some comforting words for the hero about his imminent death. For example, some students said, "Freddie, the air will take you away, but you will not suffer," and, "Freddie, there's snow on the ground so you won't be hurt." Others said "Freddie, don't cry, because you will help other leaves come into the world." These remarks show that students could approach death calmly after the implementation of bibliotherapy.

Equally important is the change in students' answers to the question of how frequently they experience fear of death or bodily injuries. To be more specific, the number of children who said they experienced this fear very often in the initial questionnaire decreased noticeably in the final one. As Figure 13.2 presents, only three children selected this choice after the

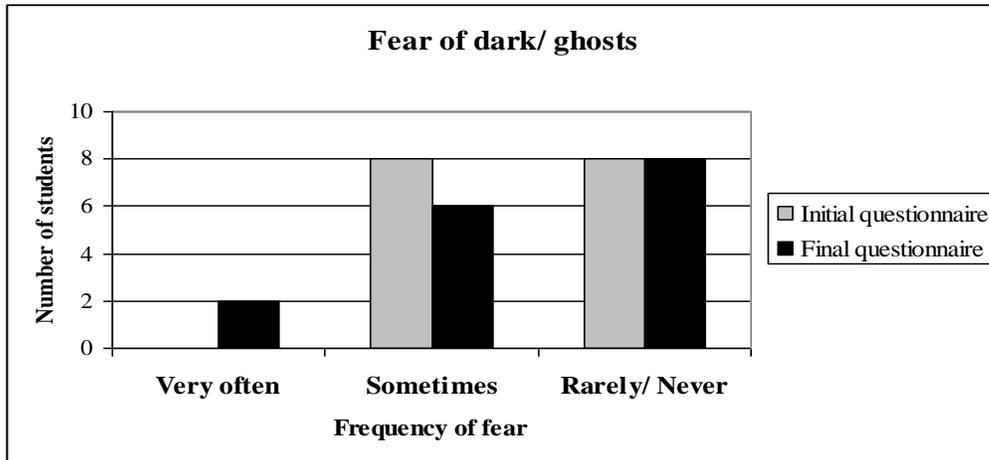
implementation of bibliotherapy, whereas nine selected it beforehand. Moreover, two students stated that they hardly ever experience this particular fear, while this choice was not selected by anyone in the initial questionnaire.



*Figure 13.2.* Scores on the initial and the final questionnaires concerning students' self-reported fear of death/ bodily injuries.

Furthermore, the method was also effective for fear of the dark and ghosts as it helped students express their feelings. At first, most children denied categorically that they feared the dark or ghosts because, as they claimed, they were too old to be scared of these things! Their denial was so strong that most of them (11 students) did not even want to accept that they had common characteristics with the heroine of the text.

However, we should not assume that children did not experience the stage of identification. Right after the lesson, they started sharing orally the experiences and the bad dreams they had on account of their fear of the dark or ghosts. They felt empathy for the heroine as they expressed their anger at her mother who left her alone in the dark room. Students also experienced catharsis thanks to the presence of the "Invisible" (Katerina's fantastic friend) who helped her overcome her fear in her dreams. Indeed, all students agreed entirely that the story had a positive end for the little girl as "...she wasn't afraid anymore when she woke up..."



*Figure 13.3.* Scores on the initial and the final questionnaires concerning students' self-reported fear of the dark/ghosts.

In addition, more children had the courage to admit their feelings after the implementation of bibliotherapy. Specifically, as Figure 13.3 presents, two children admitted that they are afraid of the dark or ghosts 'very often', whereas in the first place none had selected this answer. Also, three children illustrated fear of ghosts through their final drawings, as they demonstrated with a mark that the children they had drawn experiencing this fear represented themselves. Representative drawings that depict fears of the dark or ghosts and of death or injuries after the bibliotherapeutic intervention are presented in Figures 13.4 and 13.5 respectively.

Finally, according to students' answers in the relevant questionnaires completed after the intervention, fear of death/ bodily injuries and fear of the dark/ghosts continued to be the most prevalent fears even after the implementation of bibliotherapy. However, this finding does not confute the effectiveness of the method, but rather points out ways that it can be used in classroom settings.



Figure 13.4. A student’s drawing that represents fear of death/ bodily injuries. The man holding the gun threatens the boy who begs him not to kill him. Eventually the gun proves to be fake.



Figure 13.5. A student’s drawing that represents fear of the dark/ghosts. On the bottom left there is the mark (a little cross) that denotes that the girl in the drawing represents the student.

### Discussion

Fear of death is a developmental fear, with a normal part of human existence. Most people, minors and adults, experience it at certain times. Therefore, teachers should approach this fear with their students in an emotionally “painless” way. With this goal in mind, bibliotherapy in classroom settings can help children learn reliable fear management techniques

in the most subtle and nonthreatening way, and can therefore be a significant part of a broader death education program. That program should take into account that the intensity of death fear varies by culture and may reflect different cultural experiences with death and its aftermath. It should also be supported by other human services professionals familiar with positive development issues through the broad range of training, conferences, and curriculum development activities associated with child welfare systems.

Fear of the dark is also a developmental fear, so children at this age are expected to experience it sometimes. Consequently, teachers can use the technique to help their students recognize their emotions and de-escalate the tension they feel. When children are more mature, they can use the method to help themselves constructively overcome their fears. Our findings are consonant with the results of other studies that support the effectiveness of bibliotherapy for the reduction of fear of the dark (Klingman, 1988; Mikulas et al., 1988; Santacruz et al, 2006). However, they should be treated with caution, since no control group was included in the study, maximization of the treatment over an extended period of time was not possible, and follow-up assessment was not conducted.

These limitations, imposed by the difficulty in obtaining official permission to carry out research in schools in Greece, do not minimize the finding that bibliotherapy in classroom settings can be a promising psychoeducational tool in fear reduction and prevention programs that address a range of interrelated risk and protective factors. Programs that emphasize life skills for children and adolescents, and social, moral, emotional, physical, and cognitive competence, are compatible with schooling and the schools' role in helping students learn and develop adequate attitudes, skills, and behaviors in key areas, including positive feelings, empowerment, and personal and social skills. A caring school environment can help students make responsible

choices, and influence the attitudes of students, teachers, and human services professionals, by adopting an assets-oriented approach which provides unconditional commitment to meeting the children's diverse and evolving needs. Bibliotherapy can help all children strengthen their self-reliance, especially since using literature books in schools does not have to be reserved for specific situations or for specific students, but can also be used as a developmental intervention in classrooms.

Conclusively, our study shows that bibliotherapy has the potential to become a precious tool through which teachers can approach their students' fears. However, it should be carried out with prudence. Specifically, educationalists should take into consideration the special characteristics of their students, including their ages, their developmental stages, and the way they "see" their fears. Younger students require more concrete information, while older and higher-functioning students are able to think more abstractly. In either case, a successful bibliotherapy session allows for the free flow of ideas and associations relating to similarities between the students and the characters (Cook, Earles-Vollrath, & Ganz, 2006). Thus, the selection of material is crucial. Certain literature may only serve to compound an identified fear, while other literature may give a generalized fear some new shape. Books containing stories about abandonment in the dark and dying require obvious caution, because they may solidify the child's expectations and elevate his or her anxiety. Any material on these subjects needs to be treated sensitively, sympathetically, and realistically.

Although our results cannot be generalized, they suggest an interesting line of research for future investigation. Additional research is needed to fully describe the relationship between children and literature and to understand the effects of this relationship on both fear reduction and development.

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## CHAPTER 14

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### EMPOWERING GIRLS AND WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD: LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL ISSUES

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#### Abstract

As our world rapidly becomes interconnected through globalizing processes and the United States becomes an increasingly multicultural society, issues associated with highly varied cultural contexts are rapidly gaining in significance. For instance, in many parts of the world the obstacles and challenges faced by poor girls and women differ immensely from those faced by boys and men due to cultural norms that delegate women to the ‘private’ or domestic realm, and men to the ‘public’ or work arena. This gendered approach to social life translates into fewer opportunities for schooling, training, and access to public life for girls and women. This paper examines the issues surrounding the gendered nature of challenges and opportunities for low-income girls and women in less developed societies and some of the community based programs that have successfully assisted women in gaining advocacy and organizing skills.

## Introduction

As our world rapidly becomes interconnected through globalizing processes and the United States becomes an increasingly multicultural society, issues associated with highly varied cultural contexts are rapidly gaining in significance. For instance, in many parts of the world the obstacles and challenges faced by poor girls and women differ immensely from those faced by boys and men due to cultural norms that delegate women to the 'private' or domestic realm, and men to the 'public' or work arena. This gendered approach to social life translates into fewer opportunities for schooling, training, and access to public life for girls and women. This paper examines the issues surrounding the gendered nature of challenges and opportunities for low income girls and women in less developed societies and some of the community based programs that have successfully assisted women in gaining advocacy and skills.

A pertinent case example comes from India where collective empowerment and advocacy is understood as the key to challenging obstacles to female education and oppressive gendered work conditions. Launched in 1988-89, and now covering 9,000 villages and 60 districts in 10 states, this initiative called *Mahila Samakhya*, is a rural women's empowerment program. What makes it unique is that it is not conceived as a service delivery program. Instead, this program seeks to raise women's and girls' awareness and confidence, give them information about their rights and entitlements through development, and train them in the skills to access the rights.

We can learn from the success of programs such as *Mahila Samakhya*, how to design initiatives that are culturally specific and that build on inherent strengths among particular populations. Moreover, recognizing gender and economic disparities, as well as incorporating cultural competence into research and services to individuals and their families, promises to be a

critical component of future scholarship and practice. It also should become an important discussion and research point for scholars concerned with lifespan and family issues.

### **Global Cultural Issues and Human Services**

While the delivery of human services and the practice of social work in the United States has a long, established literature encompassing both theoretical and practice approaches (see Dunst, Trivette, Starnes, Hamby, & Gordon, 1993; Layzer, Goodson, Bernstein, & Price, 2001; McCurdy & Daro, 2001; McCurdy & Jones, 2000; Proctor, Davis, & Vosler, 1995; St. Pierre, Gamse, Alamprese, Rimdzius, & Fumiyo, 1998), the same cannot be said of addressing these issues from a more global perspective. Advances in communication technologies now transmit images and events from other parts of the world instantaneously. However, we know remarkably little about how very poor individuals in developing countries take care of their families and make ends meet and about what services they need and receive.

According to current World Bank (2001) estimates, approximately 2.7 billion people live on less than \$2 a day. In spite of this startling figure, we have little information about state sponsored and community services for these individuals or about what types of state and community intervention would be most beneficial from a local perspective. This lack of knowledge makes it extremely difficult to draw conclusions about the actual effects of contemporary globalization processes on poverty and inequality within societies.

Currently, our understanding of global poverty, vulnerable populations, and service delivery is quite limited. There is inadequate scholarly understanding about contemporary social conditions beyond the fact that individuals and their families attempt to cope within specific societal contexts and that their lives are influenced by national and transnational policies. For example, Nissanke and Thorbecke (2005) argue that, “despite the utmost importance of

understanding the globalization-poverty nexus, the precise nature of the various mechanisms, whereby the on-going process of globalization has altered the pattern of income distribution and the conditions facing the world's poor is yet to be carefully analyzed" (p. 3). Ravallion (2003) also calls attention to the fact that the "starting point" for many countries differs with respect to their initial level of economic development, making it difficult to generalize across countries and regions. Moreover, analysis of programs in developing countries has remained primarily under the purview of organizations such as the Population Council. While extremely informative, very little of that literature has crossed over to "mainstream" academic scholarship or has been translated into professional development materials for human services practitioners.

A cursory overview of the development literature reveals that an integral and little understood aspect of the globalizing process is that increasing inequalities do not necessarily lead to a homogenization of problems or to solutions that fit each social problem or community in the same manner (Population Council, 2005). Even though the challenges created by globalization may appear to be similar on the surface, local circumstances dictate how these issues are perceived and the types of responses they elicit. For instance, in developing countries, governments often focus less on reducing internal class inequalities and serving their poorest and most vulnerable populations, and more on policies and programs that decrease the differences between their countries and wealthier nations. In other words, these states are concerned with programs that increase wage labor and move them to the level of industrialized countries (Rudra, 2008).

However, what makes the situation different and more complex for developing nations today, in comparison to even just thirty years ago, is that workers need greater skills in order to be employable in the contemporary marketplace. This places developing states in the position of

having to provide more comprehensive services, in order to make their workers increasingly competitive in the global labor force. Analyses of policies and programs often fail to highlight the significant gender dimensions to the services that are needed in order to prepare and train particularly vulnerable populations to survive and, potentially, flourish in the contemporary environment.

### **The Complexity of Gender Concerns**

While development projects over the last thirty years, especially those focused on the poorest countries, have drawn attention to gender issues, most programmatic attention has focused on the sexual and reproductive behavior of girls and young women. There has been very little attention paid to the economic and cultural realities that often limit the opportunities of young people and especially girls. Particularly, from a long-term economic and social perspective, the inability of girls to access an education has both individual and societal consequences. They are unable to take care of their families economically and lack self-fulfillment and some autonomy. Instead, they are often forced to marry young and bear a high number of children. For example, Bruce and Chong (2006) state, “Perhaps the most widespread human rights violation of children in the adolescent group is child marriage. If present patterns continue, *over the next decade over 100 million girls will be married as children*” (p. 3). This outcome stands in stark contrast to the fact that most countries around the world have affirmed the universal right of children to primary education for more than 50 years (Population Council, 2005).

Of the currently more than 130 million children that are not in school, two-thirds are girls. In developing countries, about 10 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls between the ages of 6 to 11 are never enrolled schools. This is particularly true in rural areas where employment

prospects for girls and women are poor, and where girls are thought to be more useful when working in the household (Population Council, 2005). Without even a basic education, it is difficult for girls to access the rights and opportunities that may be available in their respective societies. These girls are not able, for the most part, to earn an adequate living, exercise power in their relationships, participate in the political decision making of their communities and societies, and pass on a decent standard of living to their children. Denying girls access to an education perpetuates the cycle of poverty that has globally become a female phenomenon. And yet, research indicates that education is the primary vehicle for girls and women to improve their social and economic lives and their self-esteem (Hallman & Roca, 2007).

Recent research has highlighted how the triple roles in production, reproduction, and community management of many poor women in developing countries have continued to intensify and expand through socio-political circumstances characterized by their countries' global indebtedness, structural adjustment policies, and the popularity of neoliberal development strategies (Marchand & Runyan, 2000; Nagar, Lawson, McDowell, & Hanson, 2002). This research has also illustrated that in many developing and rural areas a disproportionate number of girls and women continue to perform a large portion of domestic work. Girls and women primarily engage in unpaid labor, which includes agricultural family labor, domestic work, and volunteer work (Beneria, 2003).

Recently, the role of children in domestic work has also come under scrutiny. Especially in the developing world, young children, and particularly girls, perform much of the domestic and care work, in particular if their mothers work outside of the home. For example, ethnographic evidence from a wide range of developing countries illustrates that even when girls are given the opportunity to attend school, they are often absent due to pressures to cook, care

for siblings, and engage in other household responsibilities (Population Council, 2005). Often times, these girls need to take over the responsibilities of their mothers who are juggling responsibilities outside of the home due to their engagement in the market economy or participation in community work. Moreover, these girls' activities tend not to show up in research studies and statistical documentation. Girls are subsumed under the category of 'children' and, since they are participating in unpaid labor, their duties and responsibilities are not documented and, thus, are ignored.

From a global perspective, girls and women continue to occupy a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis men. This is particularly true for girls and women in poor areas and in less developed areas of the world. While Western feminism, with its emphasis on self-empowerment and economic independence for women, has greatly bettered the lives of many girls and women in the United States and Europe, there are many parts of the world where women's lives remain characterized by marked gender inequalities. Their lives are plagued by a lack of access to resources and they can only exercise limited decision making abilities with respect to their families and communities. Many young girls are only allowed limited access to educational opportunities, are forced to marry young and have children. This limits their future opportunities and often perpetuates the cycles of poverty into which they were born.

While globalization promises to spread democratic ideals and is accompanied by a general egalitarian rhetoric with respect to social and familial change, the lives of many poor girls and women remain tied to traditional, culturally bound ideals of their roles as wives and mothers. Moreover, class, marital status, rural-urban, and regional differences exacerbate differences among girls and women, often in the same society. This is not meant to imply that boys and men in many developing countries are not also constricted by strict cultural

conventions and the lack of economic and social opportunities. However, there is much ethnographic evidence that in many cultures, boys are valued over girls. Westerners, accustomed to the rights and opportunities attained by girls and women, especially since the inception of the 1960s women's movement, often fail to understand these issues.

Evidence suggests that girls' and women's lives could easily be improved through the institutionalization of some relatively simple initiatives (Population Council, 2005). An examination of some programs that actually have made a difference in girls' and women's lives illustrates that families and communities can play an integral part in encouraging, protecting, and furthering opportunities for girls. Understanding the lives of girls and women, and the economic and societal restrictions they face, is the first step toward creating interventions that will lead to them having brighter, more successful and productive futures.

### **The Mahila Samakhya Program, India**

We turn now to an in depth description of the Mahila Samakhya program in India. We highlight this program due to its impressive successes and its innovative, flexible evolution. Mahila Samkhya is a government implemented development program that was launched in 1988-89 in India. This rural women's empowerment program now covers 21,000 villages in over 83 districts in nine states ("Mahila Samakhya", 2009). What makes this project unique is that it is not a service delivery program. Instead, this program seeks to raise women's and girls' awareness and confidence, give them information about their rights and entitlements through development, and train them in the skills to access these rights. The underlying foundation is that incorporating the voices of girls and women into the actual development of the program will aid them in bettering their status and lives. Participating women have ascribed the success of the program to the fact that it has let them "come out of their houses" (Gupta & Sharma, 2006).

The Mahila Samakhya Program in India was originally begun in 10 districts in three states. Based on its phenomenal success, this initiative rapidly spread to multiple neighboring districts and states. This program is also known as a form of “education for women’s equality” (Jiggins, 1994, p.25). The program began with the goal of giving women the training to make choices and play a more significant role in shaping their own and their families’ futures. In contrast to more traditional development projects, the focus is on empowerment and on literacy and education as the tools to achieve empowerment.

The Mahila Samakhya program is especially unique from a global perspective because it is based on the coordination of three separate groups: nongovernmental agencies (NGOs), female activists, and officials from the Department of Education. The three sectors work together to create a flexible program that adapts to the needs of each particular environment. Thus, the activists create the strategy and the goals, which are put into effect through careful management. The nongovernmental organizations are in charge of training, support, and field assistance to the women’s group facilitators. Concurrently, the Department of Education supplies services and personnel.

Each Mahila Samakhya program is based on village and district level management. Distinctively, local activists operate in an independent manner, which is unusual in Indian society. While the program is run under the auspices of a national coordinator and a National Advisory committee, their job is to be advocates and defenders of the program at the policy level and to untangle administrative and financial issues that may arise.

At the local level, a District Implementation Unit, a group of women, coordinates the work of the educational trainers, the nongovernmental collaborators, and the women’s group facilitators (Jiggins, 1994). These groups collaborate with poor village and tribal women to

develop their sense of self-esteem, which is understood to be the foundation for a better future. Much of the training focuses on the group facilitators and on helping the women themselves take charge of their own lives. This program is perceived as a means for bringing about systemic change in the lives of poor and rural women. It is not seen as an alternative for the delivery of social services. The program highlights three features as its foundation: dialogue, partnership, and process.

### **The Importance of Dialogue**

Originally, Mahila Samkhyā came about as the result of extensive dialogue. The process itself convinced some critical individuals that dialogue was a critical aspect of any program, in particular when dealing with individuals from a wide variety of belief systems and traditions. At the beginning of the process, many of the nongovernmental agencies that wanted to work with this program viewed government with suspicion. The government was perceived as the root of the problem and as uninterested in the poor. Furthermore, nongovernmental agencies were suspicious of one another and envious of each other's accomplishments. In the past, under the purview of certain significant leaders, these organizations had failed to work cooperatively. This situation was compounded by the representatives of the Department of Education who were not sympathetic to the issues faced by rural and poor women. Gender issues loomed large on multiple levels, as men could not fathom a program for women run by women.

Dialogue became the key to building solidarity among women and creating new, more optimistic perspectives. Within these groups, women were able to speak more freely about their fears and their visions for the future. Moreover, dialogue brought these women and government representatives closer to one another, allowing them to introduce new perspectives about roles and situations to one another (Jiggins, 1994).

## **Partnership as Key**

At its inception, few in India believed that Mahila Samakhya would succeed given that each of the three groups involved represented very different entities, beliefs, and traditions. For example, a common belief often stated was that “the most ignorant person in the whole program is the government servant” (Jiggins, 1994, p.130). Nonetheless, over time, a growing recognition of the importance of self-empowerment paved the way for more cooperative partnerships.

As the dialogue between the different entities continued, each side came to see the importance of incorporating the other two sectors into its mission. The NGOs brought expertise with respect to local action, while the government had the power to mobilize resources and effect policies. Ultimately, however, it was the commitment and energy of the women who wanted to change their lives and the lives of their children that moved a highly stagnant system forward.

## **Process is Tied to Success**

A particularly noteworthy feature of the Mahila Samakhya initiative is that no clear, initial guidelines had to be instituted nor any quantitative goals had to be met. The emphasis on dialogue and partnership meant that hierarchical relations were de-emphasized, and that the program was created through collective reflection, analysis, and evaluation. As the program grew, and news of its success spread, organizers were careful not just to replicate that which had worked previously. Instead, at each step, participants re-evaluated what they were trying to accomplish and which obstacles and opportunities awaited them.

In part, the success of Mahila Samakhya can be traced to the significance accounted to highly interactive meetings during which observations and experiences were shared through a variety of media. One result was the highlighting of the specific context of women in certain regions. Since each area has its own social, economic, political, and educational context,

programs could be tailored to better meet the needs of women in their own environments. This has resulted in further successes and expansion of the program (Gupta & Sharma, 2006).

Much of the success of Mahila Samakhya, however, can also be traced to certain principles that have been instituted as the basic guidelines in all districts. Particularly pivotal is the concept of self-empowerment. Specifically, creating a positive self-image, developing self-confidence, learning to think critically, building group cohesion, and ensuring equal participation are the cornerstones of each of the programs. These values are coupled with an emphasis on group action in order to enact social change and provide the basis for economic independence. As the program developed, several other guidelines were consolidated with the initial principles. Specifically, these guidelines are (a) that during the initial start up phase, women should not be rushed since they are attempting to integrate these activities with their domestic duties; (b) that officials should be facilitators and not administrators; (c) that education is more than just attaining literacy; and (d) that women's priorities with respect to what they wanted to learn are to be respected.

Another noteworthy aspect of Mahila Samakhya is the value that has been placed on breaking down barriers between groups of women, such as religion, caste, and class. For example, the initial interviews and training consistently occur in a place to which participants have to travel. Women from very different backgrounds learn to interact, eat, and sleep with each other in a new environment. Throughout this session they analyze their differences, as well as dialogue about their commonalities. The women also learn to work as a cooperative group, a group that will communicate in the future with one another. As these groups interact, they become aware of those aspects of their lives that are most troubling or problematic for them. For example, problems in the area of reproductive health and fertility is a topic that is often little

understood by outsiders. Many poor women have had negative experiences with health clinics where they do not understand what the doctors and nurses are describing or where they dare not tell health officials what they may fear is wrong with them. The commonality of these experiences has led to increased training in women's reproductive health (which is much more extensive than family planning) and an increased emphasis on teaching women how to take care of their own sexuality and fertility (Jiggins, 1994).

Mahila Samakhya has also stressed the importance of incorporating men into the process, in order to transform attitudes and behavior. For example, group facilitators emphasize the importance of relationship building with male employees who are involved with the program. There are also workshops for men to reflect on the significance of their mothers, wives, and daughters participating in Mahila Samakhya, as well as for dealing with their own self-esteem issues. For example, extreme poverty often demoralizes the men, which then leads to domestic abuse. Mahila Samakhya workshops mobilize men to address issues such as poverty and the exploitation of labor in general.

Mahila Samakhya was instituted based on the realization that creating more schools would not lead to increased access to education for girls and women. Instead, a new approach was needed (Gupta & Sharma, 2006). To this aim, Mahila Samakhya has provided four basic elements:

- A place that provides space and safety for women to be themselves and to harness their creativity.
- A space where women can explore their own ideas and better understand their place in society.
- A way for women to effect social transformation through collective action.

- A mechanism for women to express their needs in an effective manner.

Jiggins (1994) writes, “if the program were to become driven by targets, by numbers, by the large policy picture, it would no longer connect with women’s lives. If the Mahila Samakhya and similar programs failed to liberate women’s own energy and the courage to transform family and society at the local level, the larger society would not be able to achieve the transformations it desires in the name of development, economic growth, and environmental sustainability” (p. 145).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

An examination of Mahila Samakhya reveals that state sponsored, community based programs can be innovative, effective, and transformative. This program evolved over time and through the heavy investment of its participants in its success. Yet, strikingly, its success was driven in great part by the input of the clients that were served through the program. The program was flexible enough to take into account the cultural and environmental contexts in which it was operating. Instead of focusing on the desires of the formal stakeholders, it let the women themselves determine what would work and then adapted itself to a changing environment. Furthermore, the success of Mahila Samakhya illustrates that investing in girls and women can assist not only the individuals involved, but also their communities and societies. There is extensive documentation that educating young girls and women, and giving them the tools to ensure that they have a strong economic and social foundation, has strong societal implications. It leads to lower fertility levels, delayed age of marriage, better health for the young women and their children, increased societal and political participation, and greater societal productivity.

Despite the promise of this kind of a successful initiative, it is important not to generalize to all girls or adolescents when creating programming that may give girls, women, and other vulnerable populations a head start in life. Instead, it is critical to target subsets of individuals differentiated by age, culture, marital status, social status, economic class, living arrangements, and urban-rural differences (Brady, Saloucou, & Chong, 2007). It is important to use a strength based approach that investigates what kind of programming is already in place in various areas. Many places around the globe are currently attempting to address the needs of young people and/or women. However, much of the programming focuses on school attendance, targets urban populations, and favors the participation of older boys or married women. For example, children living in rural areas and young married girls are often excluded or neglected in programs and policies that focus on individuals in poverty. Potentially, the greatest need for awareness in the human services field lies in the area of creating and sustaining culturally appropriate programs and initiatives. In order to better serve vulnerable populations such as those living in poverty, those with chronic illnesses or disabilities, as well as the elderly, we need to understand and take into account the context in which individuals and families live, the gendered nature of the relationship in those populations, and the specific challenges that they may face depending on geographical, cultural, political, and economic positioning. Only by accounting for and integrating this complex set of factors, can we begin to provide services that truly benefit vulnerable populations.

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## CHAPTER 15

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG SCHOOL DROPOUTS, A UGANDAN PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

The Ugandan education system has been overwhelmed by large enrollment as a result of the increasing population. The outcome has been a high number of unemployed school dropouts (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2007). This study investigated how informal and formal entrepreneurship education can empower school dropouts to become job creators. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents in Kampala District. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussion. Qualitative analysis was applied to describe the findings. The study found that entrepreneurship education is a possible solution to unemployment, and that small scale entrepreneurs engaged in carpentry can effectively and efficiently impart entrepreneurial skills to school dropouts. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education empowers school dropouts to become job creators (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

## **Introductory Story**

John Mulamu, aged 70 and owner of Bulamba Stores and Welding Company, dropped from Primary 2 and escaped from his father's home in 1952 because he was tired of digging in the fields and wanted to do something different. He went to Kampala City to look for a job and landed in the construction industry where he had to carry bricks at various construction sites as a porter. He later felt that a salary of 15 shillings per month was not enough and left to look for another job. He found work arranging case files at Mengo Court for a year and a half. Because he was deemed trustworthy, his bosses assigned him another job of carrying gifts to their friends, which forced him to resign. One of his friends directed him to the British Motor Garage where he got a job. He immediately identified the opportunity to provide tea and buns to employees during break and lunch time. From his savings he bought a motorcycle, which he later sold for a profit. With the funds from the motorcycle, plus his salary and money from selling tea, he bought a vehicle that he used as a taxi. Later, he combined savings from his three sources to buy land, equipment, and tools after which he started his own business of producing quality metallic items such as gates, doors, and ventilators. Currently he offers motor repair services, construction, lawn mowing, and carpet cleaning. He employs 12 people, keeps records of accounts, battles with business challenges such as competition, enjoys opportunities, is aware of threats such as high taxation, and feels he is successful.

What helped Mulamu to start the business is the ability to identify an untapped gap, willingness to assume risk, a hardworking disposition, patience, trustworthiness, a desire for autonomy, the ability to find practical solutions to problems at hand, good public relations, timely responses, accumulated experience, and a continuous search for more opportunities. Mulamu rose from humble beginnings marked by impossibilities, and through informal

education and experience, realized his entrepreneurial potential, responded purposefully to the needs of the people by starting a business, combined and added value to resources to produce goods and services, used his talent and abilities, and achieved his objective of having the job he desired most. He dismissed the search for a job indefinitely through job creation. However, there are many school dropouts like Mulamu in Uganda who need to be assisted.

The school dropouts/leavers are a worldwide problem. Kristina (2007) in United States of America wonders how millions of school dropouts can be helped. Ncebere (2000) notes that job opportunities in the formal sector of Kenya are far below the number of young people entering the job market. Siyame (2008) reports that in the Rukwa Region of Tanzania children are dropping out of various primary schools. Byamugisha (2006), coordinator of National Education for All Program in Uganda, reported that the dropout rate is 47.9%.

In Uganda, the public sector is not able to provide employment to all graduates. As such, there are particular challenges with helping dropouts to get jobs from the government, as revealed by Adyeri's (2004) study. The increase in the number of dropouts has forced the government to see entrepreneurship as a possible alternative to solving the unemployment problem. Thus, the main objective of this article is to examine how entrepreneurial education can empower school dropouts to become job creators and assist them to cope with life. This article also argues that equipping school dropouts is the responsibility of society (parents, community, academic institutions, and small-scale entrepreneurs [SSEs]). Society has the duty of teaching correct morals and discipline; academic institutions are responsible for the theoretical part of instruction, while SSEs are responsible for the practical part of learning. This cooperation will enable school dropouts to create their own job conditions that will hopefully result in a reasonably improved standard of living.

## **Definition of Dropout**

*The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship* (2006) argues that dropouts are among the people most at risk of social exclusion. According to Hornby's (2007) definition, dropouts are persons who leave school or college before they finish their studies. In Uganda, dropouts are youths who leave school for various reasons before they are awarded any certificates of academic achievement. Conversely, school leavers are youth who leave school after completing some level of education and are awarded a certificate by the Ministry of Education.

## **Reasons for Focusing on the School Dropouts**

This study focuses on youth dropouts because the education system failed them. The skills imparted by schools are in most cases impractical, which puts the youth at a heavy disadvantage, namely, that they are drowned in a sea of life problems and in a state of survival of the fittest without proper preparation. In addition, the compulsory education of the youth from pre-school through the primary and secondary level, which teaches basic skills such as arithmetic, reading, writing, physics, and chemistry, tends to remain unused when the learner drops out of the main formal education system (Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, 1998). As such, dropouts are most vulnerable to unemployment. In addition to deficiencies in the education system, there are many reasons why the focus of the study should be on youth. Specifically, youth

- Who dropped out of school are likely to roam about towns most of the time, face or cause a lot of problems, and be unable to find meaningful jobs or meaning in life (“Youth Emancipation,” 2007).

- Are responsible for contributing productively to society and their failure in this aspect affects society negatively through improper utilization of physical energy and human potential.
- Are less cared for by the government (Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, 1998), and less effort is put in knowing their needs, such as their desire for achievement, friendship, self-understanding, sharing, developing self-confidence, making sensible decisions alone, and growing from childhood to adulthood (Stromen & Stromen, 1985).
- Are energetic, enthusiastic about life, curious, influenced by peer pressure, and heavily reliant on parents because they are not sure of themselves.
- Sometimes engage in conflict with parents who insist on autocratic tendencies and obedience. The parents' insistence is seen as a block to freedom and enjoyment of friendship, and a hindrance to sex role discovery.
- Must abide by the dictates of society, namely the structured education system, the curriculum, compulsory schooling, examination and certification, and a network of policies governing the academic arena (Carrasco, 1997, as cited in Orozco, 2000).
- Must follow the dictates of parents/benefactors who determine the training to be pursued, whether the youth, as individuals, have the potential, skill or desire for particular careers. The result is youth's inability to be assertive or face life realities with confidence, and the requirement to settle for a profession which does not match their potential, making them poor performers in society.
- Have an annually increasing rate of dropping out or leaving school. Research conducted by Walter et al. (2004) revealed that, while there are no comprehensive or accurate

figures about the labor market or employment in Uganda, out of the youth interviewed, 58% were unemployed and 28% were self-employed. These figures indicate the magnitude of the problem since youth constitute almost 62% of the population.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to channel this big number to productive endeavors.

Otherwise, immorality and criminality will increase to the detriment of the nation.

Since the youth will influence the future of our society, every effort should be made to equip them with life skills. Otherwise the youth, if not occupied, can be socially, economically, politically, ethically, and culturally dangerous to society.

### **Multi-faced Problem of Youth Dropouts**

Dropping out of school is a complex, multi-faced problem. Some of the reasons youth drop out of school include

- School related reasons, such as poor performance in school resulting from making hard courses (like science courses) compulsory, extending school hours, and the government raising standards while providing minimal support to schools.
- Student related reasons, such as pregnancy, drug abuse, absenteeism, tardiness, lack of interest (43%), and HIV infected children (Kavuma, 2009).
- Family background reasons, such as parents' need for labor, the lack of school fees or funds for scholastic materials, and caring for the sick (Kavuma, 2009).
- Social reasons, including community attitude toward education (misleading advisers), lack of motivation by teachers (delayed salary), or poor health (HIV epidemic).

School dropouts who are affected by these factors experience social problems related to unemployment, poverty, demoralization due to loss of self-esteem, and the loss of investment put into education by their parents. Youth in this category are unproductive members of society

because they are not able to identify opportunities, creatively and innovatively use resources in their environment, utilize their potential, or mobilize seed capital to start a project/business and run it.

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

According to Garavan and O’Cinneide (2009), entrepreneurship education aims directly at stimulating entrepreneurship, which is defined as independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity seeking. Entrepreneurship education can be formal or informal. Formal entrepreneurship education is concerned with introducing and equipping students, during the education process from primary to tertiary levels, with knowledge about and skills for entrepreneurship. It also includes all formal government initiatives and academically established programs aimed at equipping students with knowledge and skills related to entrepreneurship. The students are taught the basics of entrepreneurship, such as concepts, forms of business, and business plan writing; hear guest speakers on entrepreneurship; and visit small-scale entrepreneurs, depending on the interests of the subject teacher. The learners become entrepreneurs after they have left or dropped out of school or after retirement age. Others, while not entrepreneurs themselves, may advise those interested in building their careers in entrepreneurship.

Informal entrepreneurship education focuses on dropouts’ and leavers’ training. Some youth are directed by parents, friends, or community members to seek training from small-scale entrepreneurs. Others find their own way to small-scale entrepreneurs as employees or as trainees in urban areas. Apprenticeship and on-the-job training, for a fee, free of charge, or for a reasonable salary, characterize their education. The graduated trainee may decide to create his or her own employment or to continue working with the trainer. Entrepreneurship education

embraces those dropouts or leavers who train themselves to become entrepreneurs through experience and the hardships of trial-and-error techniques. These are entrepreneurs who are successful, who use their natural talents to create their own employment, and who are known for their achievements later in life. Some examples include Bill Gates in the USA, Lika-Shiang in Hong Kong, Abramovich in Russia (“Billionaire Dropouts”, 2006), and Wavamuno and Mulwana in Uganda (Fick, 2007).

### **Academic Institutions’ Contribution to School Dropouts/Problems**

One of the responsibilities of society is preparing youth through education, enabling their survival and sustainability (Van Scotter, Kraft, & Hoa, 1979). One way to do so is to establish an education system and develop a curriculum that complies with educational policies and is geared toward preparing youth to become useful and productive members. Society must empower youth to become entrepreneurs who can create enterprises, as the creation of enterprises usually precedes other aspects of growth, namely, social, technological, political, and cultural growth in the life of the entrepreneur. The government/society is not only responsible for educating the youth but also for understanding their needs. This means that policy makers should incorporate the needs of the youth when enacting national laws. While the Ugandan government has enacted education policies to guide the education system, it has not adequately addressed the problem of school dropouts and leavers.

### **The Education System**

Across the board, all schools and teachers in Uganda follow the Education System policies, which discourage youth from balancing theory with practice in a way that would enable them to willingly and confidently start their own enterprises. This calls for the re-thinking of

educational policies and the development of a new education paradigm that can guide students to choose the courses and careers that match their skills. The new education paradigm should

- Compel learners to adapt to common cultural values, social norms, and new methods of doing things, including political and economic changes. This adaptation will motivate them to think creatively and innovatively;
- Enable learners/individuals to identify and realize personal and collective needs and achievements that contribute to societal productivity;
- Oblige learners to coherently integrate various systems, such as family, legal, church, employment, and economic systems, and to identify themselves within the wider social system (Marsh et.al, 1996).

This means that education at all levels must prepare learners in practical life skills as well as in academic skills. Currently, the flood of out of school youth in Uganda, as in other African countries, is forcing the government to see entrepreneurship as a possible means of reducing unemployment among the youth. The reason for this change of attitude is that some courses taught at the secondary level, such as geography, history, physics, and chemistry, seem unpractical when youth leave school. The objectives of the learners, in the African context, were not considered in formulating the curriculum (Kanyandago, 1998).

Following Kajubi's (1989) recommendations for resolving deficiencies in the compulsory education system, the government has tried to make adjustments to the curriculum and to establish and strengthen technical/vocational schools, with the intention of bridging the gap between education and work realities(United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2006). This effort aims at equipping youth with entrepreneurship skills at secondary and tertiary

institutions and with production skills at the primary level to enable them to become productive members of society.

Unfortunately, a good number of technical/vocational schools that enroll the dropout youth and school leavers train them to become employment seekers rather than job creators. As explained in the preceding discussions, the education system is not meeting the needs of Ugandans, namely, by empowering the youth to start new enterprises and employ themselves and, where possible, others. One of the ways to bridge this gap is to recognize the role of entrepreneurs and learn from them.

### **Importance of Entrepreneurship Education**

Teaching entrepreneurship is beneficial for many reasons. It strengthens the school dropout's ability to generate viable ideas for new ventures, challenges them to make these ideas a reality through business initiation, and equips them with life and business skills.

Entrepreneurship education emphasizes the acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge skills that are not adequately taught in academic institutions, namely, creativity, risk taking, imagination, nurturing, innovation, and personal development.

### **Academic Institutions' Contribution to Assisting School Dropouts**

Teaching entrepreneurship to the youth

- Equips the youth with entrepreneurial values concerning money, risk, challenge, desire for achievement, hard work, and dignity of work;
- Equips them with entrepreneurial skills related to business, such as mobilizing and managing resources, managing risk, bookkeeping, marketing, and human resource management;

- Enables them realize the cores of business life/problems such as competition, dealing with bad debts, handling uncompromising and rude customers, credit handling, lack of customers, and accumulation of inventory;
- Empowers youth dropouts to be innovative and creative in their own environment, utilize factors of production, add value to these factors, and produce products or services for society (Dana, 2001);
- Instills positive feelings about business practices, dispels traces of corruption and dishonesty, and challenges them to start their own enterprises.

In addition, entrepreneurs refine and learn new skills every day through continuous practice. Youth dropouts must be educated by the society (entrepreneurs and institutions) into which they were born. The emphasis must be on getting acquainted with African cultural values in education, which are likely to spark motivation, cement the dichotomy of Western and local education, and empower learners to creatively and confidently use the available resources in a familiar environment and initiate businesses or wealth-generating projects.

### **Informal Entrepreneurship Education for School Dropouts**

Surprisingly, less learned citizens are often successful entrepreneurs who create their own jobs and employ others. Entrepreneurs are persons who have original, creative, and innovative minds, talents, and the ability to identify opportunities and to commit themselves and their resources to make opportunities into realities. They take reasonable risks, establish new enterprises, produce value-added goods, discover and use new ways of providing a service or disseminating information, control resources, manage enterprises, provide goods and services to society, and get rewards from their enterprises. Indeed entrepreneurs are typically productive members of society (Hisrich & Peters, 1998). Entrepreneurs are found in various occupations,

including metal fabrication, carpentry, catering, and agriculture. This research focuses on small-scale entrepreneurs engaged in carpentry.

In Uganda the work of small-scale entrepreneurs in Katwe, Ndeeba, Kisenyi, and other suburbs of the city has shown that informal entrepreneurship education is an engine for economic growth. The studies of Walter et al. (2004) show that Uganda has a high level of entrepreneurship activity, which is marked by underpinning innovation and initiative.

### **Contribution of Local Entrepreneurs**

Entrepreneurship remains a challenge to learned people who are not able to apply their acquired knowledge to real life situations (outside of office jobs). Thus, educated youth and adults as well can learn from the entrepreneurial skills of local entrepreneurs as explained below.

#### **Self-Management**

Self-management is the ability to assess oneself and convert available resources into items of more value. This ability consists of skills/characteristics such as internal locus of control, need for achievement, controlling one's destiny, responding to influencing events, taking moderate risk, self-confidence, personal commitment, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, innovativeness (Whetten & Cameron, 2002), and the ability to start and run a new business, enter new markets, or bring about a large and significant impact on the local/national economy (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 1998). Most of these characteristics/skills are not considered innate, but can be stimulated by observing what entrepreneurs do.

#### **Business Management**

Business management involves the application of a host of skills, namely, identifying opportunity, commitment to opportunity, management, controlling resources, risk taking, readiness and willingness to learn new things, and networking. Identifying opportunity includes

such things as recognizing a problem facing the community (such as lack of transport or essential items, especially during community functions), identifying a need arising from customer complaints, and seeing a chance to provide necessary items or add value to existing resources. An abundance of forests in a locality, for example, presents an opportunity to make and provide furniture for sale to institutions and individual customers (Timmons, 1995).

Management skills relevant to entrepreneurs include those related to planning, organizing, finance, production, technical situations, and marketing. Entrepreneurs, for example, must establish a management/organization structure and style that will match their personalities and the business management skills required to run the business (Wehrich & Koontz, 1993).

Commitment to opportunity is the entrepreneur's willingness to follow up on an identified opportunity. Entrepreneurs commit various resources to the opportunity being pursued, including effort (labor), time, money (personal savings in the bank), and sale of personal property. Entrepreneurs are clear about the sources and uses of funds (Apegu, 2008).

Controlling resources is important, especially at the initiation of a new business. Business initiation calls for better use of resources, seeking support from experts such as accountants and suppliers, networking with the external environment, putting performance standards into place and endeavoring to maintain them, monitoring, effective supervision, and outcome determination.

Readiness and willingness to use new methods is involved in solving a stream of problems, including identifying business requirements, providing timely responses, and ensuring an environment conducive to working.

## **Risk-taking**

Entrepreneurs take a number of risks, some of which are related to finance, marketing, growth, technology, and staffing. Considering the age and condition of dropouts, they can hardly have most of the skills necessary to independently initiate and run a business without help.

Traditional teachers are often unable to assist dropouts since they are not fully conversant with the life of the entrepreneur. Therefore, entrepreneurs themselves seem to be the best possible trainers of school dropouts/leavers.

## **Networking**

Usually entrepreneurs establish informal networks within and outside of their businesses to facilitate operations. Entrepreneurs deal with all categories of people, including the academicians who overlook them, the government officials who collect taxes, suppliers who provide needed materials for the business, gentle and hostile customers who claim to know better, and relatives who seek assistance any time they visit the business premises. Under these circumstances entrepreneurs have to keep their businesses open to all, prudently serve everyone, and sustain their relationships because an enemy today may be a future customer or supplier. Dropouts may be ignorant about these situations. As such, it is not always possible for adults to trust the youth and strengthen their relationships with them, even when the youth seem to be enterprising. The youth also may not know how to handle work relationships with adults outside of their families. So, they need to learn the tactics of entrepreneurs in order to fit into and operate in the larger society. Lastly, by observing entrepreneurs, youth can learn personal qualities such as patience, persistence, and determination, qualities that are not taught at school, yet are essential for business.

In a nutshell, entrepreneurship education :

- Helps the school dropouts and leavers develop self-esteem;
- Helps the school dropouts to spot and evaluate the opportunities available to them, and teaches them saving strategies and tactics for sustaining the venture;
- Enables youth to cope with life realities because an entrepreneurship career touches most aspects of human existence;
- Exposes youth to economic opportunities through various exhibitions that activate their innovative potential (Mkhize, 2006);
- Enables youth to develop positive attitudes toward business, entrepreneurship, and self-employment;
- Enables youth to prepare for successful careers in business;
- Motivates and stimulates the confidence of school dropouts/leavers to start businesses.

### **Research Findings**

#### **Entrepreneurship Education Initiatives in Uganda**

The teaching of entrepreneurship in schools in Uganda is an outcome of the high unemployment rate not only among school dropouts and leavers but also among graduates. In 1998, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the government of Uganda organized courses and seminars for adults in institutions of higher learning and in the business community to sensitize them about entrepreneurship. Instructors at academic institutions were charged with the responsibility of teaching the courses at the universities and tertiary institutions. A tentative curriculum was provided to guide these institutions. Additionally, the Ugandan government established the Youth Entrepreneurship Program to promote the introduction of the entrepreneurship course at the secondary level,

through the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) and Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre. At the primary level, a production skills workshop was given to all teachers so that the children could do practical work at school.

This effort resulted in teaching entrepreneurship as an academic subject, but rarely as a practical subject, most likely because the teachers themselves are not efficiently equipped to teach the subject. Most of them are trained to teach business courses such as accounting, economics, and commerce rather than entrepreneurship. In addition, the government is not yet equipped to provide laboratories and examination technology to examine the practical part of the course. However, the secondary schools that have incorporated a practical component have benefited from the initiative. One of the students said, “Entrepreneurship education enabled us to comply with Uganda Bureau of Standards, which leads to improved products and acquisition of creative skills.” A student in Mityana Secondary School’s carpentry workshop, which was established to supplement the entrepreneurship subject, gave the following comment:

I have learnt how to take measurements to the furniture, count the nails and the cost of the same furniture. These skills have increased my proficiency in math and have given me a business experience. I will transfer the same experience at home during vacation to earn a little income for myself.

Another student who was engaged in vegetable growing said,

I have learnt that agriculture is a source of income. I have been able to buy shoes, exercise books and contribute to the tuition because of my tomatoes and eggplants. I am proud to take this course and I would advise every student to take entrepreneurship.

The teachers of entrepreneurship in Mityana Senior Secondary School said,

Our carpentry workshop has provided furniture to the school and reduced transport costs associated with buying furniture. Also the school's diet has improved, because the entrepreneurship class provides fresh vegetables, which was not done before.

Students are likely to utilize their new skills at home during vacation and inspire other children in their localities to do the same. In this way the dropout youth are likely to meet life challenges with entrepreneurial skills learnt at school.

### **The Extent to Which Entrepreneurship Is Taught**

A feasibility study in technical and vocational schools conducted by the author shows that very few if any schools teach entrepreneurship. This condition makes youth dropouts less productive members of society because they lack African entrepreneurial skills, a condition that forces them to look for jobs. Trainers or teachers will have to tailor western education to meet Africans' pressing needs, by using African technology and resources available in Africa.

Entrepreneurship as a course was not taught until 2000 when it was piloted in secondary schools. In primary and technical schools the course is still an expectation to be realized. This means that the majority of dropouts lack entrepreneurial skills and are thus oriented toward job seeking.

Additionally, business courses, apart from accounting, economics, and commerce, are not taught at primary or secondary levels. Other courses, like marketing, finance, management, production, and operations management, are not taught at primary and secondary levels, even at technical/vocational institutes. Cultural African economic and social values are not part of the curriculum.

## **The Need to Teach Entrepreneurship**

With regard to why entrepreneurship should be taught, the participants in the entrepreneurship focus group panel gave varied reasons, responding as follows:

- Entrepreneurship as a course is the best education for all youth who are gifted and less interested in traditional learning. An equipped teacher with entrepreneurial knowledge or an entrepreneur is likely to prepare the students before they drop out and show them what to do.
- Dropouts have the need to be assisted to set ambitious goals for life rather than seeking jobs. The gap between life in school and life in the village after dropping out of school has to be bridged by a guide with experience in productive endeavors such as an entrepreneur.
- Dropouts are likely to see the immediate positive results of training by using available resources. Having done crafts, which they can sell, the youth dropouts are paid and get money to cater to personal needs.
- Such training will resurrect entrepreneurial talents/potentials among the youth. They will be able to identify opportunities in their environment and compel them to take a risk. Youth trainees by Feed the Children Uganda have been taught sewing and given an opportunity to look for their market. They are doing this business devotedly without any disturbance.
- Entrepreneurship is a career for anyone at any stage of life cycle, including the retirees, retrenched, adults, and the youth. Skills learned at any time in life can be useful in any other point in time in the future.

- Dropouts will learn how to integrate what is learnt in school with real life situations in the workplace. The dropout who is an apprentice to a carpenter is likely to apply the mathematics learnt when taking measurement of the furniture ordered by the customer.
- The number of youth problems such as drug abuse, stealing/vandalism is likely to be reduced. NVIWODA program has been established to cater for these abuses among the youth. NVIWODA have successfully empowered and changed the life of the youth for the better. During the research one youth, a beneficiary of this program said, “I can now stand on my own after learning how to cook various dishes”.
- Once the dropouts start their own businesses they are likely to employ other dropouts as casual laborers or technical people and become models to other youth dropouts.

Small-scale entrepreneurs, who have started their businesses in Katwe-Uganda, have employed many youth who later started their businesses (focus group discussion, June 21, 2008)

This research shows that other SSEs, as colleagues, relatives, and friends, trained about 40 small-scale entrepreneurs when they were young.

### **Benefits of Teaching Entrepreneurship: The Case of Pilot Schools**

Teaching entrepreneurship at school has resulted in various benefits including the following:

- Schools have established projects such as carpentry, gardening, and canteen.
- Students have developed self-esteem, enjoyed the proceeds of their enterprises, and transferred their new skills to their localities during vacations.
- Parents are happy to see a positive change in their children. They are also seeing the value of investing in education without waiting until after graduation for the benefits.

They are promoting their children's efforts by taking care of their projects while the children are at school, harvesting vegetables or fruits, selling the products to increase the family's income, and using proceeds to buy scholarly materials.

- Teachers also have gained because they get technical advice, are called for national seminars, and sometimes the school projects are funded and they share in the proceeds.
- Schools also enjoy a good image, because politicians like to associate with such schools and board members are proud. In addition, the products from projects supplement the school diet and, in the case of the carpentry workshop, reduce expenditure on transport.
- The community also benefits since the youth copy from others how to establish small projects at home with local materials. The community may also buy garden produce, furniture, and essential commodities from the school.

This is indeed a preparation for these youth. In case they drop out or leave school, they are likely to fare better in life than those who have never taken the SSEs course in school.

The case of Kivulu in the suburbs of Kampala where the youth are trained in handcrafts, sewing, cookery, and other projects shows that youth have the potential to be creative and innovative, and are therefore potential entrepreneurs.

During Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGAM) tours in Uganda by Prince Charles of England in 2007, one of the girls, a former prostitute, acknowledged that she abandoned prostitution as soon as she acquired tailoring skills. She is enjoying tailoring as the best job of her life.

These findings correspond to the Vienna Entrepreneurship Experts Conference of 2007, which resolved that entrepreneurship should be taught at all levels of education, including in teacher training colleges and universities that offer degrees in education, in order to have a

qualified pool of capable teachers. This pool will support the envisioned entrepreneurial society whereby entrepreneurs will transform the world.

### **Reasons Why Entrepreneurship Is Not Adequately Taught**

From the literature consulted and from informants, the SSEs course is not adequately taught at all levels of education because of the following reasons:

- There are few teachers who can handle the subject, and during their training this course was non-existent.
- Entrepreneurship is still perceived as a course for academic misfits, even when teachers admire the work and contribution of entrepreneurs to economic development.
- Where entrepreneurship is taught (in pilot secondary schools), it is treated as an academic subject, and graduates can hardly use the knowledge to initiate or create their own jobs.
- Some entrepreneurs think that youth have been de-motivated to work hard and any effort to teach entrepreneurship will be fruitless.
- The government of Uganda is not adequately equipped with resources, and is especially lacking in funds to handle the course as a practical subject.
- The increasing number of learners makes it difficult to treat the subject as practically as possible.
- The pilot schools, where projects are in place for instruction, are not examinable by the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEb), but are progressively examined by concerned teachers. The scores obtained are not nationally recognized because such scores do not meet of UNEb standards.

## Contribution of SSEs to Training School Dropouts and Leavers

The findings are based on the responses of 98 small-scale entrepreneurs, 4 government official, 50 customers, and 14 dropouts. The following discussion centers on SSEs and briefly covers their background and how they train school dropouts.

### Level of education of carpenters.

Research findings show that most of the entrepreneurs who answered the questionnaires were informally trained on site. Many did not complete primary and secondary levels of education and very few obtained diplomas from tertiary institutions such as technical institutes or vocational schools (carpentry). Details are shown in Table 15.1.

Table 15.1

#### *Level of Education of SSEs*

Level of education	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Training	By Whom/Where
Primary	36	37	Informal	SSEs/colleagues/parents
Secondary	25	26	Informal	SSEs/friends/relatives
Certificates	22	22	Formal	Tertiary
Diploma	12	12	Formal	Tertiary
Degree	1	1	Formal	Tertiary
No comment	2	2	Not known	Not known
Total	98	100		

An assessment of the above information shows that the majority (63%) of the respondents were informally trained, and 35% were formally trained. Two percent gave no comment. These findings led the researcher to make two conclusions.

First, entrepreneurs have successfully established and sustained their businesses (jobs) because they were not much influenced by western education. Their success is attributed to their mastery of African cultural economic and social values, namely socialization, cooperation, and reconciliation that are the fiber of Ugandan society. Secondly, the carpenters studied are small-scale entrepreneurs. These conclusions are in response to some arguments among the learned that Africans cannot be SSEs, but can only copy from products bought from abroad. The researcher distributed questionnaires to 50 customers who happened to be degree holders. Thirty of them were males and 20 females. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents revealed that they view fabricators, carpenters, basket weavers, and other people engaged in similar endeavors as SSEs (see table 15.2). Respondents' reasons for categorizing them as entrepreneurs are given below.

Carpenters are entrepreneurs because

- They are creative and innovative in making products;
- They add value to existing resources (trees) by combining factors of production;
- Their products are not always necessarily the same (e.g., when two people each make a chair, the product may not be the same because the designs, the finishing, or the varnishing may be different);
- They make items without formal training and use their brains to create items of value to customers;
- They use abandoned items to make new products (e.g., sawdust is used to produce fertilizer).

Table 15.2

*Respondents Who View Carpenters as SSEs*

<b>R e s p o n s e s</b>					
	Frequency	Yes	%	No	%
Males	30	26	52	4	8
Females	20	18	36	2	4
Total	50	44	88	6	12

These findings are supported by the works of Drucker (1989) who maintained that such people are entrepreneurs because of the principle of creative imitation. This principle stipulates that when the entrepreneur imitates what another has done he/she perfects what was originally made and refines the skill of making it. As such the product is new and cannot be the same as the model.

**Training School Dropouts**

**How the dropouts join SSE.**

Some school dropouts are brought to SSEs by parents and relatives. Others come looking for jobs in urban areas and, after failing find employment, join SSE as an alternative. Others come purposely to be trained by SSE to acquire skills.

**Ways school dropouts become job creators.**

More research on dropouts has revealed that some of them go directly into business through sponsors. These sponsors, for example, buy motorcycles and hand them over to the dropouts or leavers under a contract that the latter will work and pay a certain amount until the loan is fully paid. After payment, the dropout takes the motorcycle to use it as a personal property. Some school dropouts simply go into the world and land on any business by trial and

error, learn on the job, and continue to operate their businesses successfully. This research shows that 28% of dropouts started their businesses without any help from anyone. Some of those who were trained by carpenters (SSEs) work for institutions, accumulate capital, buy machinery one by one, and establish their workshops. Five SSEs told the researcher that after their training they started their own workshops. The last group consists of those who decide to work for their trainers until they are ready to be on their own. Another group of dropouts start as learners under the arrangement made by parents or relatives. Table 15.3 shows that eleven SSEs created their own jobs after they received training from SSEs.

The researcher investigated whether SSEs trained school dropouts. The investigation revealed that 57% trained between one and five, 19% trained between 6 and 10, and 7% trained more than 10 trainees, while 7% gave no comment. A combination of this information and that presented in table 15.3 above show that SSEs engaged in carpentry have graduates who are engaged in the same occupation. This confirms that the trainees learned entrepreneurial skills from SSEs who trained them. These findings also show that SSEs can train and impart entrepreneurial skills to school dropouts/leavers. The researcher learned that graduated trainees also establish their businesses in the same vicinity or in other countries, such as Congo.

### **Approaches to Training the School Dropouts**

Findings on carpentry SSEs revealed that there are four approaches that seem to point toward the development of skill in the field of carpentry. The researcher found out that in the first approach the trainees

- Start as porters for loading and off- loading of raw materials or finished products and are assigned simple odd jobs;

Table 15.3

*Graduated Dropouts in Carpentry Business*

<b>No</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Name and Type of Business</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year of Initiation</b>
1	A	Previous employers	Executive Interior Designs	Kibuli	2000
2	B	Friend who is a carpenter	Furniture Workshop	Bwaise	1996
3	C	Previous Employers	Kizza Deo Carpentry	Seguku Entebbe Road	1995
4	D	Previous Employers/ Mbarara	Cohen Furniture Workshop	Katwe	2000
5	E	His father and relatives	Basiima Carpentry Workshop	Nateete	1999
6	F	On the job with colleagues	Faith Carpentry Workshop	Kamwokya	2005
7	G	His uncle who is a carpenter	BISAF Enterprises Ltd	Katwe	2004
8	H	Previous employer	Nateee Furniture Mart	Nateete	1999
9	I	His brother who owned a carpentry workshop	Masaka Boys workshop	Bakuli Kampala	2002
10	J	Previous employers	Bakiga Carpentry Workshop	Mutungo Kampala	2003
11	K	Friends who were carpenters	Mukisa Carpentry Workshop	Kawempe Division	2005

- Are attached to a senior staff to work with in simpler jobs such as sawing and smoothening;

- Are introduced to the sketch plan and learn about taking measurements in length and thickness, and reading and interpreting the sketch;
- Are given small jobs to practice on pieces of wood that have been discarded from previous jobs, and learn different types of timber (e.g. Cyprus, Muvule) and weights of wood;
- Learn about the name of tools used in producing furniture, and how to cut the wood into desired shapes and designs through practice under close supervision;
- Are taught how to read, interpret, follow the sketch plan, and make the product accordingly (doing the actual work);
- Learn moistening, by making holes in wood or prepared work for furniture production, cutting the points according to the sketch and design of the item to be produced, cutting squares, and marking the sizes and allowances to ensure proper size of the required product;
- Learn to fit together all parts of furniture, perfecting all dimensions of the item. Trainees are taught gluing, joining the parts in a piece of furniture, sanding, varnishing and completing the required furniture.

### **Second approach.**

Patrick Birungi (personal communication, February, 15, 2008) reveals that the first stage of the second approach to carpentry training is a two-stage process.

The first stage begins with the assignment of simple jobs to be performed by the trainee independently. These jobs include work on items to be used in the workshop, such as coin boxes, carpentry tables, or the repairing of worn out furniture

The second stage is the assignment of complex jobs depending on how a person masters the skills. Teaching public relations, good citizenship, and counseling the trainees with problems punctuates the learning process

During this time the trainer goes through each step for the first time, reviews what was done before, and ensures the perfection of skill, including gluing and fitting parts of furniture under an experienced trainer or employee. Most of the training and work is done simultaneously. Six months to a year should be enough time for a person to attempt a complex job and produce a piece of furniture. Such an accomplishment leads to the completion of the training period.

### **Third approach.**

Zakayo Mukasa (personal communication, June 20, 2008) told the researcher that training youth is a four stage process as discussed below:

- The trainee is introduced to the machines as they get instructions and observe what is being done on each machine.
- At the beginning, they use simple machines and later complex machines to get a feeling of how they operate.
- At a later stage, the trainees learn how to use saws to cut joints, including grooves, mitre joints, dove tail joints, and cutting at 45 degrees.
- During the last stage, the trainees learn how to put parts of furniture together and complete final touches by sand papering and varnishing the finished product.

SSEs use various approaches in training the youth. Some train youth following the approaches and stages mentioned above. Others engage the trainees in the work as soon as they arrive on site or encourage them to learn from colleagues. In some cases the trainees are given work and a few instructions and then left alone to complete the assigned work. During the

training, most trainees are responsible for their own room, board, and transportation. Some are financially assisted by SSEs in compensation for the work done, or promoted by benefactors and friends. The timing for training of dropouts also varies. Some SSEs train youth on the weekends until the trainees complete their courses. They may decide to follow the approaches and stages above, but each trainer determines the approaches, conditions, and terms of training with the trainee, parent, or benefactor.

The approaches discussed correspond somewhat with the traditional approaches of apprenticeship identified by Bond (2004), namely, modeling (the trainer performs a task while the trainee observes and tries to do the same), coaching (trainer and trainee to work as partners), fading (the trainer slowly removes support as the trainee assumes more responsibility), and scaffolding (the trainer gives temporary support to trainee, because doing most of the work allows trainees to follow instruction for forthcoming steps).

### **Reasons for Training Youth Dropouts**

Sixty percent of carpenters (SSEs) pointed out that the main reason for training youth dropouts is to enable them to create their own jobs and jobs for others. Twenty percent mentioned that they wanted to fine-tune the personality of the youth and instill qualities necessary for business, such as perseverance, patience, and interpersonal relationships at work, or to help youth cope with life realities. Twenty percent said their help is to equip the youth with business and management skills. Others gave reasons such as

- To develop untapped resources, such as innovation and creativity, in youth;
- To show the youth how to use time wisely and avoid questionable behavior;
- To channel the thinking of the youth so that they can cope with the influence of all forms of media and the international world;

- To help the youth to develop themselves and to find ways to get money for survival.

### **Challenges Met in Training Youth Dropouts**

Problems faced by SSEs in training youth dropouts arise from the training environment, as discussed below.

Mrs. Apolo, who owns a carpentry workshop, told the researcher that she encounters various difficulties including

- Many mistakes made by trainees during the process of learning;
- Lack of raw materials, because certain tree species are not always available and wood becomes expensive;
- Trainees engaging in dubious and unscrupulous dealings;
- Disoriented behavior of some trainees, namely, fights, alcoholism, drugs, and theft; (personal communication, July 24, 2008);
- On the job accidents due to improper use of machinery and the failure to use, or lack of, protective gadgets;
- Waste due to lack of basic knowledge in measuring, cutting, and the production of items;
- Failure to listen or understand instruction, and low level of concentration at work, leading to poor quality of products;
- High costs associated with readjustment and modification of faulty products (focus group discussion, June 19, 2008).

One participant was concerned because

Political upheavals in neighboring countries, e.g. Kenya, which raised the price of resources and items as well, affect the trainees because of strictness involved in using

materials and the number of the trainees to be retained or put on hold until later when conditions improve.

He also added

Competitors' intervention by taking capable trainees before they complete the training, sudden exit of trainees for unknown reasons, as well as loss of customers who are loyal to the trainees all constitute greater risks to our businesses. (focus group discussion, June 19, 2008)

These findings show that SSEs face risks but are good managers and trainers who can keep their businesses running. The same findings reveal that SSEs take a risk in assisting members of society and sharing in its burden of reducing unemployment. Furthermore, SSEs have an understanding of the behaviors and personalities of the youth dropouts, which facilitates their role as trainers. Also, the responses show that risk taking is part of SSEs life.

### **Challenges Met by SSEs in the Carpentry Occupation**

The study also found out that SSEs engaged in carpentry experience problems that might be stressful (see Figure 15.1).

The youth mentioned that they also met problems, some of which are

- Lack of finances for fees,
- Self-sustenance during the training (accommodation, lunch, supper, etc.),
- Lack of materials/tools (some trainers require the dropouts to have their tools),
- Working conditions (e.g. working in the hot sun for long hours),
- Demanding trainers.

There are also some benefits to training youth. A SSE who trains school dropouts mentioned that these youth bring new blood to the workshop, they do the work faster and more

efficiently once given instructions, they are hard working, and they help with the loading and unloading of items from vehicles. Respondents also revealed that the trainees are good at running errands, are creative and very enthusiastic about learning, and share very interesting stories that bring humor to the workshop.

### **Work Oriented Problems**

Work oriented problems include absenteeism; a high rate of turnover; time consuming coaching, monitoring, and supervision; limited space for operation that limits the number of trainees; machines and raw materials to acquire; lack of storage facilities; breaking or mishandling of machines and carpentry tools; waste and loss arising from mishandling of raw materials; carelessness in storing and sustaining the produced items; lack of knowledge in carpentry; giving trainees time off; theft of workshop property, such as varnish, nails and pieces of timber; and a desire for quick money.

### **Culture Related Problems**

Culture related problems include parents taking away their children before the completion of the course, last-resort mentality (school leavers are taken to SSEs to wait and leave as soon as the examination results are out), the low level of education of the school dropouts or leavers, training activity that is not effective because more time is spent in training than working, and delayed understanding of craftsmanship in relation to formal education.

### **Personality Related Problems**

Personality related problems include youth dodging work, leading to a shortage in production; youth demanding payment for their contribution to workshops during the learning process; lack of focus (not sure of what they want); fear of failure; superiority complex among

older leavers (think they know better than the entrepreneur when giving instructions); and failure of the trainees to understand their problems.

### **Job Creation Skills Learned by School Dropouts**

The researcher conducted two focus groups of 14 trainees and investigated their experience and skills learnt during their training. They said that they learnt the following skills.

#### **Technical and production skills.**

Trainees mentioned that most of the technical and production skills learnt are linked to taking measurement, making angles, making and reading a sketch plan, operating the machines, making hollows, corners and handles of furniture, and varnishing.

#### **Marketing skills.**

Trainees learn how to welcome the customer, show and display products, negotiate the price, and convince the customer to return or tell a friend about the workshop and its products.

#### **Management skills.**

Trainees said that once they had learned the basics, they would plan with the trainer any time a customer brought in an order. Organizing is taught from the time the items are unloaded from the vehicle up to when the product is completed and displayed for sale. Public relations and communication skills in the workplace are marked by interesting stories of what is going on at work, in the country, or in trainees' localities.

#### **Teamwork.**

Most of the machines are shared and as such there is need for cooperation at all times.

#### **Finance skills.**

Trainees mentioned that finance management skills are acquired when the trainer negotiates the price with the customer and when payment is made. Records are not always kept,

but they know how much a product costs, how to calculate the balance owed by the customer, how to fill out the invoice, and how to determine how much the customer owes the business. Inventory management is done when new raw materials are bought and when the products are completed or ready for sale. As such, inventory management skills are learnt progressively. Purchasing skills are learnt when the trainee is sent for errands, since some raw materials are bought daily.

Major entrepreneurial qualities of SSEs observed by trainees include patience when a hostile customer visits the business, perseverance when sales are low, working hard when the demand for the product is high, and a sense of humor when the day is busy, too hot, or too cold.

### **Whether Graduated Trainees Wanted to Work for SSEs**

All seven participants said they want to start their own businesses once they get some capital. The reasons for this aim include to get as much money as their trainers, to be their own bosses, to go back to their villages to establish the same businesses, to train other youth suffering like them, and to use their potentials.

### **Trainees Recommending School Dropout/Leavers to the Trainer**

All the trainees said they would recommend another school dropout for training. They gave two reasons for their recommendations. First, the school dropouts would acquire skills mentioned above. Secondly, such youth would create their employment, have less time for engaging in misconduct, and become productive as responsible citizens.

### **Action Plan**

Handling the problem of youth dropouts through entrepreneurship training is a long process that requires various strategies for successful implementation. The whole process begins with prevention programs involving organization and administration, school climate, service

delivery/instruction, instructional content, staff-teacher culture, specific programs, all-inclusive programs, and family groups as discussed below.

### **Organization/Administration**

Organization programs require small scale entrepreneurs and low student-teacher ratios, a means to locate dropouts, prevention programs outside the traditional school setting such as friendly discipline programs, flexible planning and scheduling, community-business and school collaboration, reducing suspension and increasing retention, transition programs, involved community role models, business partnerships, and collaboration between schools.

### **School Climate**

The school climate should be marked by orderliness, safety, motivated staff who want to offer better services, parent involvement in school activities, good family atmosphere, and students involved in gratifying activities, such as farming where they will harvest and enjoy the produce.

### **Service Delivery/Instruction**

This program is concerned with the identification of possible dropouts, followed by parent-staff intervention and collaboration to prevent dropping out via counseling, increased individual attention, close monitoring, and tutoring.

### **Instructional Content**

The curriculum should correspond with the real world of the learner, promote the culture, and be applicable to the people (parents and children).

### **Staff/Teacher Culture**

The school administration should be in a position to create a culture where the teachers focus on academics as well as other aspects of learners' development. Setting and applying

motivational strategies, namely, reasonable and timely compensation, can do this. Teachers should act as mentors rather than teaching as an obligation.

### **Specific Programs**

One of the specific programs is “adopt-a-student.” This involves pairing students with business volunteers who act as mentors. This program helps the student to think about future employment, identify occupational interests, and endeavor to get a job that matches their interests and competencies (Orr, Hughes, & Karp, 2002).

### **All Inclusive Programs**

This is a comprehensive vocational instruction program that integrates academics, occupational training, counseling sessions, job training, and work experience. It is a school-industry partnership, which results in improved attendance, basic skills acquisition, and competencies development (Gvaramdze, 2007).

### **Family Group Counseling and Mutual Support**

These groups are for counseling and provision of mutual support to the youth. Staff members provide supportive counseling and referrals in the extended day program. Parents are encouraged to visit each student’s home at least once, to share the objectives of the program.

### **Community Based Alternative Schools and Youth Centers**

This category of group provides programs such as preparation for employment (employment orientation), job training, counseling, team work, motivational development, and other services. It consists of the following

- Specialized classes in culture, civics, politics, economics, and language;
- Remedial instruction and cultural enrichment activities;
- Training for parents on how to care for their children;

- A team approach in which public or private agencies provide support and encourage parents to be involved, caring adults who support the youth through flexible scheduling;
- Placement incentives for those who show more effort and achievement;
- Part-time moonlighting.

### **Recommendations to be Implemented**

#### **The State**

The State has to do the following in order to manage and reduce the dropout rate:

- Keep records at all levels (school district, and nation),
- Design and support research on dropout issues,
- Develop mechanisms to address graduation rates,
- Issue a government policy to all schools regarding record keeping,
- Decentralize larger schools,
- Provide curricula to meet the needs of learners in a local context,
- Hold schools accountable for the dropout rate,
- Develop a broad based community partnership to secure the youth.

#### **Districts**

School districts must do the following:

- Make dropout issues a concern;
- Initiate early intervention;
- Promote self- and communal expectations of development;
- Train teachers and empower them to be confident;
- Provide a wide range of expectations of dropouts;
- Work with families and churches to develop a program for drop out prevention;

- Work out motivational factors for all stakeholders;
- Encourage parents' partnerships;
- Keep records on dropouts to identify groups at risk and set policies to fund dropout prevention;
- Train the staff in methods to identify the youth with problems;
- Utilize a team approach for working with youth dropouts;
- Develop model programs for learners with parent/teacher/government partnership;
- Educate children to meet the changing demands of society;
- Integrate practical and theoretical academic subjects;
- Conduct broad based assessment and planning between the government and stakeholders, including social agencies, community youth organizations, teachers, school administration, businesses, and students/parents;
- Provide dropout prevention activities;
- Revise educational policies;
- Expand networks with the business community;
- Select staff with competence.

The government is in position to sensitize the masses to recognize the work of operating entrepreneurs, identify and reward successful ones, provide some financial assistance, and invite and establish links between them and institutions so that the youth can be oriented to job creation initiatives.

Entrepreneurship facilitates economic growth and is linked to most courses in the education system. It is the responsibility of the government to stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit

in all citizens at all levels especially among youth dropouts and school leavers (“European Enterprise,” 2010).

### **Schools**

The school’s responsibility is to

- Identify, target, and monitor youth at all levels;
- Use an interdisciplinary team approach (use vocational, academic, and sports personnel to plan, monitor, and promote extra instructional support);
- Provide more attention and instructional support;
- Involve business and community leaders in nurturing;
- Teach children;
- Reassess the relevance of existing programs;
- Make a positive school climate and positive relationships a high priority;
- Teach cultural values and ethics at all levels to ensure against highly enterprising and professional criminals;
- Address conditions beyond school as feasible and appropriate.

### **Knowledge Dissemination**

Each school should note experiences, activities, achievements, problems, and the impact of having entrepreneurial projects, and combine such information in a booklet. Such booklets could be shared at a function organized by the District Education Officer, where best performers would be awarded. The same work could be shared at the regional level, and information could be compiled for a contest. At the national level, the same efforts could be made to motivate better performers. Textbooks on entrepreneurship could be written based on such information.

Hopefully, such literature would be rich and meaningful for teaching entrepreneurship as a course.

### **Conclusion**

The main objective of this research was to find out how entrepreneurship education can empower school dropouts/leavers to become job creators or to cope with life. The findings revealed that SSEs empower school dropouts/leavers to become job creators. The study revealed that the efforts of all stakeholders in society are geared toward helping school dropouts/leavers to create jobs and become productive citizens. Also, the study discovered that there are many factors that force the school dropouts and leavers out the formal education system. Policy makers should know and deal with these factors. In addition, dropouts have dissimilar characteristics which require an array of approaches, such as individual attention, curriculum adjustment, basic and social skills training, and experimental education.

Also the study conceptualized that equipping school dropouts/leavers with entrepreneurial skills is the responsibility of society. All stakeholders concerned, namely the government, parents, teachers, the community, including institutions, should continuously provide resources on a larger scale than currently given. The government should increase the budget for school dropouts and leavers and support SSEs who are training school dropouts, in addition to mobilizing communities to promote school dropouts' developmental projects. Schools should teach the entrepreneurship course to all children under their charge.

Parents and faith-based organizations should instill moral values and promote informal practical training. NGOs should ensure the sustainability of their projects and the skills acquired by the school dropouts they train on the job. The business community should sponsor and employ school dropouts, and institutions should provide opportunities for dropouts'

advancement. The SSEs should equip school dropouts with entrepreneurial skills, which would enable them to create their jobs. There is a need for upright community members to help school dropouts overcome their sense of disconnectedness, their helplessness, and their disorientation to life. The whole society should be involved in addressing the school dropouts' problems because the training of young members of society requires combined efforts and sustainable development. The African proverb, which says that bringing up a child is the responsibility of the community, is as absolutely relevant to the present generation as it was for the past generation.

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## CHAPTER 16

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### IMPROVING INNER-CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION ORGANIZING

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#### Abstract

Urban communities across the country are gradually beginning to intervene in public school reform. Community organizations are helping residents identify school concerns, plan new educational promises, explore reorganization tactics, and work together to improve schools.

These community organizers' main goals are to increase inner-city school student success, grow a rapport between schools and communities, and increase public participation in the control of education. In order to be successful, education organizing has to involve members of the community, parents, youth, and educators in leadership growth.

The following composition was written to show that while education organizing is still a somewhat under-studied and unverified trend, the work that organizing groups are doing in urban communities is gaining support among education reform advocates, policymakers, and funders as a vital approach for building public participation necessary to maintain change.

## **Part I – Overview**

### **Roots of Contemporary Organizing**

In order to understand how organizing can help our inner-city public schools and communities grow, one must examine the key economic, political, and social trends of recent decades that have affected urban schools.

#### **Economic pressures.**

The 1980's was a period of revitalization, but only for upper class and the upper middle class Americans. The bottom 70% of Americans experienced a decline in incomes (Shirley, 1997). Median wage fell because of the decline in the manufacturing sector. Middle and working class Americans suffered in their overall quality of life, as health care, social life, resources, security, and, of course, education were negatively impacted. Divorce studies in the US have shown that unemployment and low pay increase hostility between husbands and wives. Analyzing divorce during the three recessions between 1970 and 1982, Donald J. Hernandez, Chief of Marriage and Family Statistics at the U.S. Bureau of the Census, estimated that the recessions accounted for about 50% of the increase in divorced or separated families between 1968 and 1988 (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 1996).

#### **Lack of political accountability.**

Electoral participation steadily dropped from 1960 to 1988. At one point, only one out of every two citizens exercised his or her right to vote. Americans had grown more cynical and disengaged when it came to politics (Shirley, 1997). Usually, when you see a lack of participation in politics by a community, it is because of a lack of faith in the political system, a sense of alienation from the electoral system and political processes, feelings of exclusion, the existence of structural barriers within electoral politics that hinder participation, a perceived lack

of effectiveness, the non-affirmation of group difference by and within electoral politics, and the virtual lack of a group's presence or representation in electoral politics.

### **Social instability.**

Touching back on the previous section concerning financial pressure and divorce, in recent years, the US has seen total destruction in regards to the institution of marriage. America has the highest divorce rate in the world, where half of all first marriages end in divorce. Children are growing up in households headed by a single parent, usually a female figure. A growing body of evidence is linking the absence of fathers in the home to greater behavioral problems and lower academic achievement in schools (Shirley, 1997).

With a history of inadequacy of the family, economic anxiety, and declines in political participation, how can public action improve low-income urban neighborhoods and schools?

### **Why is the Education Organizing Approach Necessary?**

A call for increased accountability is loud and clear. In urban education, there are continuing reports of poor performance in schools. If Americans can adopt the notion of organizing and follow through with it, then our poor and working-class communities and schools may make significant achievements.

### **What is Preventing the Course of Action?**

Urban school backgrounds can be resistant to change even though they know that their students are struggling. Shirley (1997) gives three factors that play a role in arresting the process of change:

- Social actors,
- Community problems,
- The organization of the school.

When describing a major community player, you are essentially describing a person who determines whether parental engagement and school change will be successful. As an example we will call this particular actor the principal. Some principals may say that they want community engagement in their school, but when it comes time to actually appoint community members and parents, principals are quick to assign tasks such as lunch supervision to these individuals. Parents are not able to make good use of their knowledge of the community or of their own children through these tasks.

Community tribulations, such as high crime rates, the availability of illegal drugs and guns, and the growing number of youth gangs all play a part in hampering the growth and development of inner-city public schools.

School organization in inner-city schools needs to undergo changes as well. Schools in these areas have a propensity to be too large, and there tends to be less importance on academics and more an emphasis on sports. Collaborative learning and parental participation are organizational changes that need to happen. Instability of leadership at the level of the principal and the district are also huge factors that obstruct change.

## **Part II – Approaches to the Issue**

### **Developing a Method for Organizing**

In their literature, *Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools: Successful Community Organizing for School Reform*, Gold, Simon and Brown (2002) describe a theory of change as well. They believe that positive change has to happen in three areas:

- Leadership development,
- Community power,
- Social capital.

These areas all contribute to building community capacity. Increased community capacity leads to public accountability. An increase in public accountability creates the political will to produce advances in areas that are found to be directly associated with improving schools and student achievement.

In order to see outcomes in urban school reform, there are some activities that have to take place in the community. Some examples may be

- Recruiting parents, youth, and other adults in the community to become members of community organizing staff;
- Developing leadership training;
- Detecting possible organizing “issues” (as discussed in part I);
- Performing research of school problems;
- Defining targets (areas that need to be developed);
- Becoming familiar with sources of data to support work;
- Identifying detailed school improvement policies.

The purpose of these beginning steps is to affect a change in the community. While there may be an eventual school or district level change, there has to be a group level change first. Individuals in the community have to take on leadership roles, people have to be familiar with the school system and its methods, visibility has to increase, and the group has to make themselves known to people outside of the community. These effects may eventually lead to long-term change when a larger number of citizens become involved, deeper relationships with people in the school system are formed, and education organizers continue to address crucial development issues.

## **Part III – A Case Study of Sacramento ACT**

**(Taken from Dingerson, 2005)**

### **Overview**

Sacramento ACT (Area Congregations Together) is a congregation-based organization (with work done through churches, synagogues, and mosques) that is part of a larger organizing network named PICO (Pacific Institute for Community Organization) in California. Throughout the 1990's, the Sacramento Unified School District was one of the lowest performing districts in the state. One out of ten students read at grade level, and one elementary school in the district, Susan B. Anthony, had 140 suspensions in one year.

### **The Problem**

Organizers and parents began visiting schools and building relationships with principals. ACT also conducted a listening campaign through which they invited teachers, parents, and principals to meetings. They discussed problems, experiences, and concerns about the atmosphere in schools.

A lot of the parents were uncomfortable with school environments and interactions with teachers. They felt ignored and unwelcome. They did not know how to facilitate their children's education. Teachers and principals were frustrated by the lack of parent involvement and support.

Sacramento ACT was able to use this listening campaign to build a foundation of support among the parents, teachers, and administrators. The following account details their projected solution, the actual plan, and the results:

Parents constantly stated in discussions that they would be more comfortable if they met with teachers at home, instead of at school. Leaders and organizers explored this

idea by asking teachers what they would need to feel comfortable visiting parents at their homes. They talked with administrators to see whether they would support the idea. A proposal was then formed for a teacher-home visit program.

ACT was unable to find a model for this type of program anywhere else in the country, so they researched models of parent engagement, and while organizers gained important knowledge of what it takes for parents to be successful partners in their children's education, they were not able to identify any templates for teachers visiting parents as the first step. The closest representation was the home visits conducted by social workers. Conversely, those visits often have a tendency to make parents feel as though they are being accused of bad behavior.

The idea behind the teacher home visit program was to stimulate a positive environment where parents and teachers were able to learn how to support each other's efforts to help children learn. ACT realized that the one-on-one conversations central to community organizing were a more helpful model and integrated the relationship-building components of these conversations into their proposal. For the program to work, ACT recognized that teachers needed to be trained in order to conduct effective visits. They developed an outline for training that included role plays, the sharing of predetermined ideas between parents and teachers, and eventually testimonials from parents and teachers about the impact of these visits.

Sacramento ACT leaders met with the union president and executive director to discuss the proposal, explain how students would benefit, and determine whether the union would support the effort if teachers wanted to go on these visits. The presence at

these meetings of teachers who were already committed to the program played a significant role in gaining the union leaders' support.

The union's main concerns were that teachers be compensated for the visits and that teachers should not be forced to participate in the program. Both of these concerns were already important issues to ACT, as one of their key goals was to increase respect for everyone involved, and they viewed compensation and choice as key elements of this respect. Once these concerns had been addressed, the union agreed to support the program.

The next step was to discuss the proposal with the district's school board to gauge the level of support or opposition. Fortunately, ACT had already built an initial relationship with the board during a brief, earlier campaign around public safety. By the time ACT approached the school board about the teacher home visits program; they not only already had a relationship with board members but had also secured the support of teachers, principals, and union leaders for the proposal. This support proved critical because the district's initial response was that the union probably would not support the program. Once ACT had dismissed this barrier, board members had little objection other than the potential cost of the program. ACT had determined that \$40,000 would fund a pilot version of the home visit program at eight schools. In each school the teachers would have the opportunity to vote on whether to participate. ACT's parents and staff would provide the training and monitor the impact of the program.

The school board and superintendent were supportive but ACT was concerned that they were moving too slowly. To increase the pressure, they issued a challenge directly to the superintendent to accompany teachers on 20 home visits in one week to

see the program in action firsthand. The superintendent was reluctant, stating that he already knew the district well, so ACT issued their challenge publicly through the local media, and the superintendent agreed.

This challenge proved to be a tremendous success for both sides. The superintendent became a hero to the 20 families he visited and got great press for his efforts, and ACT gained a powerful champion for the program in the now-committed superintendent. Shortly thereafter the school district agreed to allow eight pilot schools to use the parent involvement funds to support the teacher home visit program. Teachers in the eight schools voted overwhelmingly to participate in the program.

In order to ensure that there was clear data on the outcomes of the program, ACT recruited faculty at a local university to conduct a formal evaluation. The evaluators found that after just one year, there were improvements in standardized test scores, classroom behavior, parents' and students' attitudes toward school, and homework completion rates. The results were even more dramatic over the next few years. For example, at the Susan B. Anthony Elementary School, where 21 different languages are spoken and 100% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches, suspensions dropped from 140 per year to 3 and students' average score on the statewide Academic Performance Index test increased from 448 to 662, all within five years.

By 2000, 39 schools in the district were participating in the program, which now had a full-time administrator and an in-house evaluator. ACT had already trained 775 teachers who had conducted over 7,000 home visits. State Assemblywoman Nell Soto heard about the project and sponsored a bill to get state funding for the teacher home-visit program. When ACT found out about the bill, they went in to make sure the mechanics of

the project would be maintained and to provide the data from their outside evaluation.

Their testimony helped pass statewide legislation that provided \$15 million in grants to school districts throughout the state that wanted to implement similar programs.

Over 500 schools statewide have launched teacher home-visit programs, and ACT parents, teachers, and staff have traveled across the state and the country to “train the trainers.” Moreover, Sacramento Unified School District has been recognized statewide for its tremendous improvement, part of which can be attributed to the Home Visit Program. (Dingerson, 2005)

The case mentioned above should serve as an outline for change in urban public schools. With civic engagement from the community, business leaders, parents, and other outsiders, the probability that inner-city schools undergo a positive educational transformation will increase.

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## CHAPTER 17

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### RELATIONAL NEEDS IN THE CLASSROOM

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#### Abstract

Directly and indirectly, educators help meet the relational needs of students in ways that promote students' growth and development. Powerful opportunities exist to increase our effectiveness in the human services education profession by recognizing and responding to the relational needs of students. In this article, eight relational needs are described which, when satisfied, enhance human functioning. Part of the education and training process in human services is aimed at assisting and empowering students toward growth and maturity as adult learners and effective helpers. Best practice in the helping profession focuses, in part, on the dynamics of the student/teacher relationship.

## **Relational Needs in the Classroom**

In the field of human services, we understand and cherish the primacy of interpersonal relationships. Underlying the specific theories and methodologies that we teach is a client-centered approach (Rogers, 1951). We see harmful interpersonal relationships as one source of many personal and social problems. We also know the power of interpersonal relationships as curative agents for many of life's ills. The need to create genuine and empathic relationships with others is incorporated into the National Standards (Standard 17) of the Council for Standards in Human Service Education (Council for Standards in Human Service Education [CSHSE], 2005).

Valuing the client for his or her own uniqueness and accepting the client regardless of life circumstances are key values taught to human services students. Likewise, effective human services education programs adopt a student-centered perspective. We recognize that human services education and training is personal. Students come to higher education with various academic and professional goals. They also bring a multitude of personal, cultural, emotional, and social needs. Teachers interface with students on more than academic issues. Human services educators who are prepared to engage students head-on and help them recognize their many personal needs make huge strides in educating the whole person.

Students' emotional, psychological, and relational needs frequently become apparent in the course of training in the helping professions. Perhaps it is because the content of human services programs is focused on issues related to human functioning and the dynamics of social and behavioral problems. Perhaps it is because human services educators are experienced clinicians and are typically more aware of emotional, behavioral, and psychological functioning than the average person. Regardless, much of the workload of the human services educator deals

with the non-academic issues in students' lives that affect their academic performance. In addition to supporting students as they face family, health, financial, and legal concerns, human services educators interface with students struggling with other non-academic issues, such as a need for attention, poor self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, and fear of success, to name a few.

Part of the client-centered approach in the helping professions is the emphasis placed on the dynamics of the client-counselor relationship. Surely, issues of transference and counter-transference are recognized and commonly addressed, especially within a psychodynamic framework. Similarly, from the student-centered perspective, one key element is the teacher-student relationship. Who doubts the impact that teachers and classmates have on a student in the classroom? Who, in higher education, does not have a story of a favorite teacher; a teacher who went out of his or her way to make a difference?

### **Student/Teacher Relationships**

In the book *The Ones We Remember* (Pajares & Urdan, 2008), educators reminisce about the teachers who changed their lives. Story after story is told of teachers who influenced students' career choices and life-long pursuit of hobbies, and whom students continued to visit many years after leaving school. The powerful interactions between teachers and students have made for some of Hollywood's most inspiring and dramatic films. Recall Sidney Poitier in *To Sir, with Love*, Anne Bancroft in *The Miracle Worker*, Jon Voight in *Conrack*, Edward James Olmos in *Stand and Deliver*, Morgan Freeman in *Lean on Me*, Michelle Pfeiffer in *Dangerous Minds*, Samuel L. Jackson in *One Eight Seven*, and even Whoopi Goldberg in *Sister Act 2*. Keen sensitivity and focus on the non-academic needs of students certainly embodies best practices in human services education. The teacher who recognizes something special or personal about a

student, communicates this to the student, and then offers encouragement and support is one who will make a difference.

The work of Bergin & Bergin (2009) in *Attachment in the Classroom* found that the quality of the student-teacher relationship had a direct positive impact on the student's level of knowledge, test scores, and motivation, with positive relationships leading to fewer classroom and academic problems. They also found that students who developed healthy attachments to teachers were able to control their emotions, were more socially competent, and were more willing to explore new ideas in the classroom. They concluded that effective teachers connect with their students and care for them by providing necessary warmth, respect, and trust.

Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams, & Osborne (1999) in *The Emotional Experience of Learning and Teaching* concluded that a teacher's personality and style are of supreme importance to the student's ability to perform inside and outside of the classroom. In other words, the personhood of the teacher is more critical in effecting lasting change than the subject matter or pedagogy.

### **Classroom Dynamics**

Best practices in human services education include raising students' awareness of the dynamics of the student-teacher relationship while inviting students to recognize and examine their interactions with fellow students and their interactions with clients in their field placements. Transference phenomena occur in the classroom between students and teachers and among students themselves all the time. Failure to recognize and respond effectively to the many personal needs that students bring to the classroom is to miss the student as a whole person and to produce graduates who may be intellectually prepared and technically proficient but who lack

the essential characteristics of insight and empathy. Students in the helping professions develop insight and empathy by recognizing and meeting their own needs (Murphy & Dillon, 2008).

It is vital for human services faculty to recognize students' emerging needs, whether subtle or obvious, and to respond in ethical and effective ways that foster student growth and development. Human services programs accredited by CSHSE are required to foster student development (Standard 20) by helping students increase their awareness of their values, cultural biases, philosophies, personalities, reaction patterns, limitations, and style (CSHSE, 2005). Bringing students' issues and needs to their awareness before they enter field placements with actual clients reduces the risk of students acting out ineffectively and unethically (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2010).

Clearly, human service education is not psychotherapy. It is not designed to be psychotherapy or a substitute for psychotherapy. Yet, students bring their personal problems, interpersonal difficulties, and numerous psychological and emotional needs to the classroom. Many of these needs and problems are uncovered during clinical and professional training. Also, many students in human services programs change their lives for the better, in part, due to the nature of professional education and training. Some students in clinical and professional training report decreased use of drugs and alcohol, improved parenting methods, healthier coping styles, and enhanced relationship skills. Credit for these positive changes is given to the knowledge gained in the classroom and the relationships developed with faculty, supervisors, and fellow students (McElfresh, 1985).

### **Relational Needs**

A review of the human services and psychology literature reveals one constant and that is the paramount importance of the helping relationship. Clinical theories and sophisticated

intervention models abound, but one unifying factor is that of relationship. From Buber (1958) to Bowlby (1969), Rogers (1951) to Winnicott (1965), and Sullivan (1968) to Stern (1994), theorists, writers, and clinicians have emphasized that relationships, both early in life as well as throughout the lifespan, are the source of meaning and validation of the self (Erskine, 1998). Theorists like Spitz, Fairbairn, Bowlby, and Guntrip go so far as to describe humans as relationship seeking by nature (Moursund & Erskine, 2004). That is, from the moment of birth people strive for human contact and relationship. Numerous theories of human motivation conclude that people will do just about anything for attention, admiration, appreciation, and affection from others (Berne, 1964).

People have all kinds of needs and Maslow (1970) did an excellent job of naming and categorizing these various needs. Relational needs, however, described by Maslow as the need for love and belonging, are different than the needs for survival and physical comfort and safety. Relational needs are the needs for human contact and human interaction. Relational needs are present at every age and stage of human development and we do not outgrow our need for relationship.

When basic relational needs are met, the normal emotional and psychological growth process continues. When basic relational needs are not met regularly or sufficiently over time, especially during childhood, the process of human growth and development is thwarted and psychological, emotional, and behavioral symptoms begin to appear (Spitz, 1945). When relational needs are not met there is a tendency for the unmet needs to become stronger. As expected, a person whose relational needs are not being met will seek alternate ways of obtaining needed attention and contact. The absence of need satisfaction may initially be manifested as a range of disruptive emotions and behaviors, such as irritability and frustration. When relational

needs are not met over time, the lack of need satisfaction is experienced as a loss of energy, apathy, a lost sense of hope, and the development of a cynical attitude, as in “Who cares?” or “What’s the use?” (Erskine & Trautmann, 1996; Moursund & Erskine, 2004).

Erskine, Moursund, and Trautmann (1999) indicated that relational needs are met in interpersonal relationships characterized by the sustained “contactful presence of another person who is sensitive and attuned to our relational needs and who can respond to them in such a way that the need is satisfied” (p. 123). A lifetime of unmet relational needs leads to distorted relationships and skewed expectations later in life. Sometimes, a person comes to realize that a relational need exists only as a result of the need not being met and the ensuing emotional distress that occurs. One example is the hurt one might experience when not receiving recognition in some desired way.

There is no telling how many personal needs human beings have that are met in interpersonal relationships. Erskine and Trautmann (1996), however, identified eight universal relational needs that clients bring to the clinical situation and that, by extension, students bring to the classroom. These include the following:

1. **Emotional Safety and Security:** Personal safety and security are rooted in the belief and experience of having our physical and emotional vulnerabilities protected. It is living without fear of actual or anticipated danger. Freedom from shaming, criticism, and ridicule and knowing that someone will block harmful judgments provides a basic sense of trust.
2. **Validation and Affirmation as Significant:** When our thoughts, feelings, and experiences are validated as important to another person we learn to believe in ourselves. For healthy growth and development to occur it is necessary to believe that someone

cares about us and considers our point of view to be important in some way. When others ask for our point of view and take our opinions and experiences seriously we come to believe in our basic worth. Validation and affirmation from others, especially those whom we consider important to us, provides some of the essential building blocks of self-esteem and self-confidence. The classic example is the adult who praises a child's scribbled drawing.

3. Acceptance by a Stable and Dependable Other: Throughout the lifespan, we need role models to who we can look and upon whom we can rely. The process of developing an accurate and stable personal identity is enhanced when we interact with others who are emotionally stable. A lack of permanence in the environment creates a shaky foundation for interpersonal relationships. Rejection from others fosters hurt, fear, shame, and self-rejection. We are free to grow and experiment with new behaviors when we know that we can return to the protection provided by steady and dependable others.

4. Confirmation of Personal Experience: If we never meet anyone who is "just like me" in some way, it is easy to believe that we are the only ones to have a particular type of problem or a particular life circumstance. Being in the presence of others who have or have had similar thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences provides a needed sense of normality and mutuality. Yalom (1975) called this *universality*. The need to be believed and to have our experiences confirmed as real and genuine is a powerful dynamic. It means, "I'm not the only one." How valuable it is to our growth and development to be with others who have experienced what we are currently experiencing, who have been where we are.

5. Self-Definition: The relational need of self-definition is described as knowing and expressing our own personal uniqueness and individuality and being acknowledged and accepted by others. When we communicate our self-chosen identity through the expression of our needs, interests, preferences, and points of view and we are accepted for who we are, the need for self-definition is met. Self-definition means not being defined or labeled by others. Rather than being told what we should think or feel, being asked to tell others about ourselves is one way the need for self-definition is met. When someone blocks labeling and name-calling we receive recognition and acceptance for our unique personhood.

6. To Make an Impact: There are many reasons why people help others. One motive is the need to make an impact on another person in some desired way. It is the desire to make a difference in the lives of others. Sometimes this impact has a positive tone, as in giving someone a compliment. It can also be negative, as in imposing oneself on another in some way. We receive information about ourselves when we say or do something and then gauge others' reactions. When others react to our comments, jokes, and gestures we know we have been heard and received; a relationship has developed. Not much of a relationship exists when we are ignored by others.

7. To Have Other People Initiate: In infancy, we could not meet our own needs for food or comfort. We relied on the actions of others to receive nourishment and holding. We learned language because others spoke first. Throughout the lifespan, we need others to initiate actions and activities so that learning can take place. We need people to reach out to us and to call us into relationship. How comforting is it to be sitting in a crowd of strangers when, finally, someone we know comes to sit next to us? At times, we may

have an important point to add to a discussion and we need to be invited to participate because we are unlikely to participate actively on our own. We need others to introduce new information and ideas all the time. Clearly, there are times when we need to make the first move rather than wait for others. However, there are also numerous occasions when we require initiation into a new opportunity or way of being.

8. To Express Love and Appreciation: The relational need to express appreciation, gratitude, and affection is seen when we do things for other people. It is heard when we tell others what we think about them and how we feel about them. Our words of gratitude and acts of kindness must also be received by the other person. Recall the hurt or frustration when someone rejects our compliment, refuses our gift, or does not acknowledge our love and affection.

Some may ask if *the need to be loved by others* might be a ninth relational need. In actuality, the vital relational need for receiving love from others is met when the eight relational needs described above are met on a sufficient basis. To have our relational needs met is to be loved by others (Erskine, Moursund, & Trautmann, 1999).

### **Relational Needs in the Classroom**

How, then, are students' relational needs expressed in the classroom? What situations and activities occur in academic settings that provide opportunities for relational needs to be addressed? In the classroom we see students exhibiting needs for excessive attention, fears, and avoidance of contact with social withdrawal, fears of conflict, rebellion and defiance, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, perfectionism, fears of making mistakes, and, of course, all manner of transference phenomena. Some students distort the teacher-student relationship and attempt to get their archaic childhood relational needs met by the teacher or other students in the classroom

in duplicitous ways (Kaiser, 1965). Consider the following conditions and scenarios regarding students' relational needs in the classroom.

### **Security**

Students whose physical and emotional vulnerabilities are protected are free to learn and grow normally. Living without fear of actual or anticipated danger fosters basic trust and allows a necessary level of bonding to begin. Being sensitive to and responsive to the insecurities of students by blocking unintentional and even deliberate harmful judgments by others in the classroom provides essential safety and security for students allowing them to open themselves to learning opportunities. A place where one's vulnerabilities are understood, honored, and preserved rather than criticized or exploited makes for a powerful positive learning environment. A nonjudgmental attitude and corresponding actions of faculty, staff, and administrators is an integral part of the educational endeavor.

### **Valuing**

When students' thoughts, feelings, and experiences are validated as important to others students learn to trust and believe in themselves. For positive learning to take hold it is necessary to believe that someone cares about us and considers our point of view to be important in some way. Although the origin is disputed, the old saying, "No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care" is very much at the heart of informed teaching. Skilled teachers help students find meaning in their experiences and take students' questions seriously. Best practice in education includes the affective component, and skilled teachers are attuned to the emotions of their students and respond reciprocally. That is, students are taken seriously when angry, consoled in some way when they are sad, encouraged when afraid, and celebrated when they are happy. Students may not be used to having others show an interest in their ideas or

experiences and they may be wary of and uncomfortable receiving such attention and positive feedback. Students who have had little positive validation in life may display a lack of confidence, make poor eye contact, exhibit decreased participation in the classroom, and may question a teacher's motives for caring so much. At these times, it is incumbent on teachers to proceed slowly and to titrate the dosage of their attention and care so as to not overwhelm an insecure and fearful student (McElfresh, 2007). This attunement to the student's unique pace, rhythm, and cadence is one way of conveying validation of the student's unique experience.

### **Acceptance**

Students, particularly beginning human services workers, need role models to whom they can look as they develop a professional identity. Students cultivate a personal and professional style by imitating their teachers and supervisors. The acceptance shown by teachers and mentors provides a solid rock of consistency and reliability that some students may have never experienced. As a result, students are free to experiment with new behavior when they know they can return to the protection provided by steady and dependable teachers.

What about the student who idealizes the teacher? Perhaps the student is conveying a true appreciation for what the teacher is providing or, maybe, the student is expressing, albeit indirectly, the relational need for acceptance by someone stable and secure. Some students have had little acceptance in their lives and as a result may display dependency needs and clinging behaviors such as asking unnecessary questions, requesting out-of-class time, and seeking special assistance. At these moments, educators have an opportunity to demonstrate firm professional boundaries and caring confrontation. Clarifying a student's need for acceptance and his or her maladaptive behavior is a way to support the student in finding appropriate relationships to meet their relational needs.

## **Mutuality**

Early in their training, students in human services programs may enter the classroom believing that they are the only ones to have a particular type of problem or some unique life circumstance. By moving through the human services curriculum and interacting with peers, students come to realize that many of life's challenges and situations are, in fact, quite common.

The relational need of mutuality, to be in the presence of someone "like me," is tremendously important. For example, an educated Chicano male might have few peers in his own community but find comfort, support, and encouragement in meeting a faculty member or fellow student who understands this particular circumstance because he has "been there". The opportunity for students to express themselves and learn about each other is enhanced when teachers utilize learning communities, team projects, service-learning activities, sharing exercises, and collaborative learning strategies. At times, teacher self-disclosure may help meet a student's relational need of having their thoughts, feelings, or experiences confirmed as real and important. Naturally, appropriate professional boundaries apply. Normalizing a student's experience goes a long way toward helping the student become less self-critical and more self-accepting, a quality that human services students want to promote in their clients during their clinical internships.

## **Self-Definition**

Supporting students to identify and communicate their unique personal identities, through the expression of needs, interests, preferences, and points of view without rejection, helps meet the need for self-definition. In the mental health and human services professions there is a temptation for faculty to categorize students and for students to label and diagnose themselves and each other. Effective teachers block this kind of labeling and name-calling in the classroom

and demonstrate recognition and acceptance for individual differences. Classroom activities and assignments that identify issues of cultural diversity help students meet the need for self-definition. Course assignments that require self-reflection invite students to ask themselves the hard questions that they will be asking their clients in some practice settings.

### **Making an Impact**

There are many motivations for entering the field of human services (Corey & Corey, 2007). One such motive is the need to make an impact on another person and to make a difference in the world. Fostering the growth of another may be the prime motive of some people entering the helping professions. Students in human services programs strive to make a difference with their clients during the field placement experience. Likewise, some students help each other by organizing study groups, sharing resources and materials, and by mentoring or tutoring other students. Inviting students to take leadership roles in the classroom helps them to maximize the positive impact they can make.

Some students may attempt to influence faculty by working extra hard, complimenting a professor, engaging the teacher in conversations about non-academic topics like fashion, music, sports, or religion, or by creating disturbances in the classroom. Faculty who are intimidated or too easily distracted may actually reinforce a student's maladaptive style inadvertently by engaging in these tangential conversations. Clearly, there is nothing wrong with talking to students about fashion, music, sports, or religion. However, the mindful professor considers which relational needs the student may be expressing at the moment and then decides whether or not to participate in the conversation or whether to bring the student's behavior to his or her attention. Certainly, it may be necessary to caringly confront students who make a habit of

following the teacher from the classroom to the office, request excessive out-of-class time, offer unnecessary gifts, or make inappropriate comments.

### **Having Others Initiate**

Perhaps a student's quietness in the classroom is an expression of the need for someone to initiate contact. Some students may have important points to add to class discussions and may need to be invited to participate because they are unlikely to participate actively on their own. There is a difference between students who do not participate because they are apathetic, unprepared, or tired and those who come to class prepared but need a push to become active and involved.

Teachers and trainers introduce new ideas and information that students have never considered. Teachers initiate lines of thinking that lead to important learning for students. Students come looking for education and training, and the program curriculum and course instructors prompt them to consider unknown aspects of themselves. Effective education and training helps students do things they never imagined doing and things they have always imagined doing.

### **Expressing Love**

At times, students will express their appreciation and admiration to faculty and peers for their support. The giving of token end-of-the-year gifts, thank you notes, tearful hugs, and nominations for faculty teaching awards are all expressions of love and gratitude, and teachers must be mindful, while exercising good and ethical judgment, that this relational need is important to students. Accepting students' compliments may be difficult for some faculty due to their humility or diminished self-esteem, yet it is important for faculty to accept that students are deeply grateful for all that they have learned and received in the training process. Opportunities

abound in human services education and training to help students talk about their experiences of giving to their clients through the field placement experience.

### **Evaluation**

In order to promote compliance with CSHSE National Standards regarding students' personal growth and development and the ability to cultivate mature and empathic relationships with others (CSHSE, 2005), human services education program administrators, faculty, and supervising professionals must review their current teaching, training, and advising practices to identify those areas where students' relational needs are likely to be expressed. Sometimes it is readily apparent when students fail to get their needs met. Students who create problems in the classroom, make advising difficult, perform poorly in the field placement, or make excessive demands on the time and energy of faculty, support staff, and administrators are, in actuality, communicating distress regarding their unmet needs, while also harboring expectations that their needs should be met at that moment.

A process of formative assessment can help faculty and program administrators identify strategies that work well for managing issues affecting student success and those areas requiring change. By asking the following questions, human service faculty and administrators can assure that program policies and classroom practices afford students the best opportunity to reach their personal goals and the standards of the profession.

Individual faculty may ask the following:

1. What is the student really saying, at this moment, about their needs?
2. What relational need(s) is the student expressing currently?
3. What are my responsibilities, if any, for bringing the student's needs and behavior to his or her attention?

4. What are the likely consequences if I address these issues with the student?
5. What might happen if I do not address these issues with the student?
6. What issues of diversity are apparent in this situation?
7. What ethical and professional standards come into play?
8. What supports are available to help me make effective choices?

Program leadership needs to inquire about the following:

1. What innovations can be made to provide students with opportunities to meet their relational needs? For example, service-learning activities or collaborative learning strategies might help.
2. What portions of the program curriculum have a potentially disturbing effect on students? A classroom assignment designed to unpack family of origin issues or a course in, say, domestic violence may stir long forgotten needs, memories, and emotions.
3. What supports are in place to help students maintain and enhance their personal growth and development, such as student counseling services, mentoring programs, and support groups?
4. Is departmental planning conducted with students' relational needs in mind?
5. Does the demographic composition of the program empower students to address their relational needs? For example, is the program department sufficiently diverse so that students feel safe and supported in their academic endeavors, free to form healthy attachments to faculty and peers, and able to discover positive role models? Is a milieu of inclusion and respect apparent?

## **Conclusion**

It is not the job of teachers to be therapists to their students or to meet all of their students' relational needs. The contract is one of teaching and training, not treatment. Yet when educators are aware that students bring their relational needs to the classroom, teachers can make prompt determinations about whether to engage a student in some particular way or to set limits and boundaries on the type and degree of contact. Both types of responses, engagement and non-engagement, offer opportunities for teachers to guide, instruct, and support students to learn and grow.

Teachers, too, have their relational needs and these are frequently manifested in the classroom. Educators dedicate themselves to making an impact on their students and in making the world a better place. Human services professionals clearly have needs to help other people, and one motivation for entering the field may be the need to have their own experiences confirmed, to not be so alone with their own experiences or circumstances. Some educators seek attention, admiration, and validation in the classroom. They feel proud when their students succeed and may define themselves, in some ways, in terms of the achievements and failures of their students.

Much of the influence that teachers and students have on each other is, of course, unconscious. That is, while teachers and students are about the daily work of education and training they relate in ways that meet and frustrate deeper needs. Academic and behavioral problems in the classroom can be traced, in part, to unmet relational needs and distorted expectations on the parts of teachers and students (Zygouris-Coe, 1999). Therefore, best practice in human services education, and indeed all education, must include an awareness of and thoughtful response to students' relational needs.

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## CHAPTER 18

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### *MUNTU* (HUMAN BEING) AS *MUNTU*: THE BEST PRACTICE OF HUMANISM IN HUMAN SERVICES: INFERENCES FROM THE MONOGRAPH

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#### Abstract

The sum total of the group's philosophy makes the philosophy of that group. This chapter identifies humanism as the common philosophy pertaining to human services. It argues that the sum total of the philanthropic beliefs and practices embraced by human services workers constitute the philosophy of humanism. Humanism as a philosophy underscores the practice of human services, as exhibited in this monograph.

Philosophy and human services cannot really be divorced from one another. Therefore, the editors of the monograph attempt to make explicit the humanistic philosophical assumptions typical of human services education and work. It is our assertion that each discipline from which current human services programs borrow their eclectic curriculum has humanistic philosophical presuppositions and that much harm and very little good can come from obscuring or denying these beliefs as tenets of humanism.

## **Introduction**

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine and analyze some of the philosophical ideas underpinning education, research, and practice in human services in our contemporary times, especially in the growing secular society in the United States of America and around the world. In human services literature, the word philosophy has been used to mean academic discipline, treatment modality, or technology.

McClam and Woodside (1989) asked pioneer human services worker Dr. Harold L. McPheeters, "What is your professional philosophy?" He answered, "Well, my training in psychiatry was very much an eclectic approach. Whatever psychiatric approach works - use it - not just psychoanalysis or just biological approaches or just electric shock treatment or just short term psychotherapy" (pp. 1-9). And when they asked him if there was anything that could be called a "human service delivery model," he said, "Human services workers are not constrained by any single philosophical orientation or technology...they are much more oriented to helping the client...using a range of biological, social, psychological approaches" (McClam & Woodside, 1989, pp. 1-9).

Also in the literature, human services philosophy is seen as the sum total and implementation of fundamental American values: justice, individual rights, and democracy. These two connotations of the term philosophy are lower-level usage of it. My concern is that the philosophical tenets of the human services profession have not yet been examined and articulated into a coherent philosophical foundation for individual practice, for human services delivery systems, and for human services education.

There are principles and human values, or philosophical foundations, by which human services seek solutions to individual problems and social issues. The essential merit of a philosophy or principle is that it not only presents a perspective that harmonizes with that which is eminent in human nature, but it also induces an attitude, a dynamic, a will, or an aspiration, that facilitates the discovery and implementation of practical measures. Leaders in human services delivery systems and human services education would be well served in their efforts to solve problems if they would first seek to identify the principles involved and then be guided by them (Kisubi, 1999).

The thesis of this monograph is that scientific/naturalistic/evolutionary humanism is the overarching philosophy that synchronizes the eclectic epistemology of human services delivery systems and human services education with their effort to put political and moral ideology into action. Humanism is indeed the common, if not universal philosophy of all the helping professions under the genus human services. *The Humanist Manifesto I* (Sellars & Bragg, 1933) systematically lists the beliefs that have been conveniently used to inventory the beliefs of modern human services, thereby indicating how close human services professionals are to confirmed humanists.

Human services as a developing study and discipline has for its purpose the analysis and clarification of human aims, actions, problems, and ideals, a purpose that could be categorized as secular humanist. Because both philosophy and human services teach us to say what we mean and to mean what we say, it is imperative to discuss the philosophy within human services. Human services professionals, just like other humanists, will deserve to be called humanists if and only if our activities include not only the quest for the meaning of life through research, education, and services delivery, but also a constant examination and reexamination of the

philosophical foundations of the profession.

### **The Primacy of Philosophy**

Every profession, which has deeply impressed itself on the human family, has some great idea (philosophy) that has given direction to the profession's life and form to its practice. As Aristotle once remarked, everyone adheres to a philosophy whether they are aware of it or not (Lamont, 1997). Every adult conducts personal life according to some general pattern of behavior that is more or less conscious, more or less consistent, and more or less adequate to cope with the everyday affairs and inevitable crises of the human scene.

This grinding pattern in the life of every person is his or her philosophy, even though it is implicit in actions rather than explicit in mind, an "inarticulate major premise" as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes (1881) put it (as cited in Lamont, 1997, p. 4). Such is the strength of tradition that we are expected to accept the particular philosophy or religion prevailing in the group into which we were born. The sum total of the group's philosophy makes the philosophy of that group. In any case, as human beings, African, Latin, North American, Asian, or European, educated or uneducated, plodding or brilliant, we simply cannot escape from philosophy. Philosophy is everybody's business.

### **What are Humanism and humanism?**

Humanism with a capital "H" was the intellectual and literary movement during the Renaissance characterized by the rediscovery and study of the Greek and Roman classics and by an emphasis on human interests rather than on religion or the world of nature. Humanism with a small "h" is the character or quality of being human. It is a system or attitude in thought, religion, etc., in which human ideals and the perfection of human personality are made central, so that cultural and practical interests rather than theology and metaphysics are at the focus of

attention.

### **The Humanist Manifesto I & II**

*The Humanist Manifesto I* (Sellars & Bragg, 1933), signed by several clergymen, educators, and progressive intellectuals, gave us a system of non-transcendental ideology. This earlier version was rejuvenated in 1973, when *Humanist Manifesto II* was published (Lamont, 1997).

Humanism is a broadly allusive term, which is subjected to a wide variety of applications. Of these there are three basic types: humanism as classicism, humanism as modernism or post-modernism, and humanism as human-centeredness or anthropocentricity (Harris & Maloney, 1996). The third is what characterizes all the helping professions under the generic rubric human services. According to *The Humanist Manifestos I and II* (Wilson, 1995), many kinds of humanism as a philosophy exist in the contemporary world. The varieties and emphases of naturalistic humanism include "scientific," "ethical," "democratic," "religious," and "Marxist" humanism (Lamont, 1969, p. 291). To this we can add Adler's existential humanism, and Maslow's "humanistic psychology." Adler asserted that because of the redeeming influence in social interest, individuals' drives can be guided in constructive directions, toward the common good (Adler, 1964, p. 211; Vondracek & Corneal, 1994, p. 53). He, like most humanists and those of us in human services, was eloquent in asserting the uniqueness of the individual (Adler, 1964, p. 67).

In any case, both the *Humanist Manifesto I* (Sellars & Bragg, 1933) and its 1973 sequel *Humanist Manifesto II* (Kurtz & Wilson, 1973) sound out many themes that are evident in the ideology of modern human services: new attitudes about the universe (instanced by faunal and floral environmental protectionism), humans' nature and destiny (manifested in human rights

advocacy), supernatural forces or the absence thereof, the breakdown of the sacred/profane dichotomy, the importance of human individual personality, the emphasis upon this earthly life and human well-being, and the reliance upon human intellectual powers (Streng, Lloyd, & Allen, 1973, p. 343, Lamont, 1969, pp. 290-300; Seidman, 1983).

### **The Basic Philosophical Principles & Values in Human Services**

According to Eriksen (1977, p. 8) the human services philosophy reflects the values and priorities of American society. Its philosophy also embodies the diversity of interests, needs, values, and lifestyles of a pluralistic nation, *based on the power of reason and science* (emphasis mine). The supreme ethical aim of humanism is, in fact the earthly well being of all humankind, with reliance on the methods of reason and science, democracy, and love. Humanism incorporates the sound principles of other philosophies or religions. Thus, although it regards as poetic myth the supernatural aspects of Christianity, it incorporates much of the Judeo-Christian ethic set forth in the Old and New Testaments (Lamont, 1997). Human services is an organized service effort to put the ideals of a democratic society into action, and is also the embodiment of a culturally universal commitment to building a just world order based on respect for human rights and needs. This is a humanist effort.

If we ask why the need for such commitment has come about, the answer is because the pursuit of scientific knowledge, technical innovation, and business as usual has been directed by low ethics and aggressive politics, which have been compounded by atavistic evils of the past. Society has traditionally been based on a double standard. The commonest form of government has been some species of oligarchy, wherein a small number of privileged persons lord power over the rest (Lyon & Duke, 1981, pp. 4-5). The same pattern has generally prevailed throughout the social system. Wealth has always been unequally distributed, with a handful living in luxury

while the masses are ground down by poverty (Kozol, 1987; Ropers, 1988). This situation persists today in most parts of the world and is intensified by the disparities between the more developed economies and the underdeveloped (Lipson, 1981), and among the suburbs of modern cities, their ghettos or slums, and the rural areas. In fact, the gap between rich and poor countries, and between rich and poor households in every economy, is growing.

Meanwhile, other established forms of discrimination continue to perpetuate inequality and provoke a sense of injustice. Scarcely anywhere in the world do people of different races or ethnic groups consort together in the same community under equal conditions. Witness the segregated neighborhoods in the United States, the extremes of apartheid in South Africa, civil wars in Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and the Sudan, ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, skin-head xenophobia in France, Germany and the United States, and mayhem in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Religious prejudice reinforced by differences in culture ferments dislike and even hatred. Witness the recent situation in Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics and the schism between orthodox Anglicans and liberal Episcopalians over the ordination of women and gays. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of 11:00 am on Sunday as the most segregated hour, when church services are conducted in segregated churches in the United States. The feud between Pakistani Moslems and Indian Hindus over Kashmir has left many dead and wounded.

And in an act of injustice that is most pervasive of all, because it has lasted the longest and is the most widespread, the male half of the human race keeps the female half in a position of legal, economic, and social dependency. In some places this has amounted to servitude, and is manifested in unequal wages, wife-battery, and raising children alone and in poverty. According to Charles Zastrow (1993), "The greatest physical damage is usually sustained by women in

spouse abuse” (p. 190).

### **Human Services as Eupraxophy**

Whether these conditions will continue depends wholly on our awareness and attitudes. These situations will remain unchanged or will worsen if we do not care about them, but if we care enough, they can all be altered. The development of human services is, in fact, a sign that gives modest, but genuine, grounds for hope. In much of the 20th century a rising chorus of voices protested these new dangers and ancient degradations, bringing them to the forefront of consciousness and thereby awakening our consciences. This collective consciousness and conscience subsequently became synchronized into Eupraxophy (praxis - good, well; sophia - scientific and philosophical wisdom): a utopian idea that embodies a set of convictions and practices (technologies) offering a cosmic outlook and an ethical guide to life. Eupraxophy is the heart of human services, because together with Abraham Maslow, it conceives of human life as a process of growth that is essentially independent both of supernatural and natural determinism. Like humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1961, 1965, 1968; Naranjo & Omstein, 1971; Tart, 1975), human services characterize this process as being one of "self-actualization." Note the essential positive view of human nature implied by this term.

Human services work is not about sitting back to ponder, "Who is 'sick': unjust societies in this global village or the individual child starving in Somalia?" Human services professionals are committed to an action oriented approach to services and to a relentless search for what Maslow (1961), and later in 1964 President Linden Johnson, called "Eupsychia," the psychologically healthy society or "the good society," based on a personalized philosophy.

### **Human Service Professionals as Humanists in Humanist (Eupraxophy) Institutions**

The basic ethical purpose of human services is the task of constructing defenses of the

good life in the minds of those who help advocate for clients. This training is done chiefly through research, education, and the development of interdisciplinary intellectual cooperation (Mehr, 1992, p. 304). In a constantly changing world, human services have to combine continuity with innovation. Its position at the crossroads of different branches of knowledge is an ideal one for promoting synergy among them. In the light of its philosophy, it focuses on those categories of people who are poorest, most deprived, and most vulnerable. Human service educators and practitioners are humanistic because they seek to promote the welfare of humankind by eliminating pain and suffering.

Human services workers are harm-reductionists. Some work and belong to theocentric or faith-based institutions, such as the Salvation Army, which adhere to theological humanitarianism. Many of them also adhere to ethical humanitarianism, which is the doctrine that our duty is to work for the welfare of the human race and that human perfectibility is attainable through our own efforts without divine aid. God helps those who help themselves.

The basis of human services thought is humanitarianism, the idea that we have a responsibility to our fellow human beings (Rourke, 1991, p. 533). Most students, providers, and educators often ponder about their obligation as humans. A survey of human services students reveals that their manifest goals in human services are based on humanism and humanitarianism. The message is loud and clear that most people come to human services to be their brothers' and sisters' keepers.

Andrew J. Murillo, Jr. (1995) aptly puts it, "I chose human services because in my life this is the place where I belong and freely choose to be. I care! My goals as a Human Services worker are: to help others gain insight into themselves, to help them cope with and resolve their difficulties, to help them become one again with themselves and relieve their pain, sorrow, and

suffering and to give back what society has given me" (p. 1).

The philosophy and values of human services professionals focus on assisting people, as individuals and as members of larger social groups, to improve their lives (Eriksen, 1977; Harris & Maloney, 1996). Human services view human being as basically good and human nature as basically capable of improvement. In this light, the human services professional has a strong commitment to improving the social condition as well as conditions for individuals. This commitment is enshrined in the human services bill of rights and the profession's commitment to advocacy that sometimes meets with opposition from those enjoying the status quo (Mehr, 1992, p. 303; Stone, 1979; Sunley, 1983).

However, assumptions about the nature of truth and knowledge, reality and the human being, the good life, and the like, exert a very strong influence on the questions human services professionals ask. Their pursuits, the means by which they attempt to get at data, and the interpretations they place on findings are predominated by these assumptions. Indeed if we make no assumptions and hold no values, we would have neither questions to ask nor any goals to pursue. Thus, as Abraham Maslow stated, "The issue is thus not over whether or not to have a philosophy, but whether to have one that is conscious or unconscious. (Maslow, 1965, p. 134; Maslow, 1968, p. 23). As Paul Kurtz (1989) once argued before an audience of the Kansas City Skeptics and Eupraxophers, "This is the time to build Eupraxophy Institutions." In these institutions humanism will be practiced, humanistic voices will be heard, and humanistic practices will be faithfully executed for such causes as the liberation and revolution of females, minorities, the aged, and the handicapped (Dunbar, 1970, pp. 483-92).

## Discussion: Humanism Now and in the Future

Humanism is not just charity; forgiveness and tolerance are necessary results of it. It is a philosophy that breaks the shackles of oppressive orthodoxy. Humanists human services workers should be brave enough to shrug off these same shackles. In light of this liberation, feminists and many humanists believe in the affirmation of vulnerable groups and individuals through a series of battles, especially in the field of civil liberties (Lamont, 1997).

Humanism is primarily the affirmation of *untu* (*person*) and *bantu* (*people*) freedom, namely, *untu's* value as *untu* (*a person's value as a person*). Everything that debases *untu's* personality, that brings *untu* down to a *kuntu* (thing), is inhuman. In this case any system that abandons people in the ghetto of poverty is inhuman. Schools that segregate the disadvantaged youth, spouses that batter, parents or other adults who defile children and men who rape are all inhuman. In all these examples the victims are treated as *buntu* (objects), which is against Kantian philosophy: "No one should be used simply for the achievement of another person's ends" (Kisubi, 1999 p.1).

Human services workers, like confirmed humanists, condemn these dehumanizing actions. Both champion the way toward meaningful social change, by giving us, among other humanistic thinking benefits, two clear-cut social goals: to prevent deprivation and to promote the enhancement of human life. The twin goals are, of course, the cornerstone of human services and humanism as we know it today.

As mentioned earlier, behind all dehumanization is the tendency for the perpetrator to regard the victim, *untu* (person), as *kuntu* (thing), to be tossed around with impunity, or passed by on the street without notice. This oversight of the intrinsic human value reviles humanists and human services professionals. If it does not, the core of humanism has been seriously violated or,

worse still, its promise to humanity is broken, and, hence, everything that debases individuals and groups for their handicap, race, gender, nationality, body size, or physical endowment, is allowed to rear its head, unchallenged. Vigilance, skepticism, and optimism characterize humanism and human services, and are manifested in their belief that everyone on earth can realize the best and noblest, and are carried out in their tireless commitment to the unconditional advocacy for peace and justice.

Both humanism and human services realize that society, despite its humane intentions, has, through the rat race of economic and political competition, "burned" the souls of many poor and disadvantaged people. Time has lowered their self-esteem and left them on the sidewalks in the midst of winter, walking the night like Hamlet's father's ghost. Although those who come forth to help such people sometimes mistake help for charity, humanism and human services take such actions to be executions of justice that those we help rightly deserve. Help is unconditional (or should be), just as are education, work, and self-advocacy.

Therefore, to reduce *untu* to the function of a producer and a consumer, especially if everyone is not given an equal place in production and consumption, does not signal humanism but dehumanization. Career development programs, sheltered workshops, job placement programs, and other human services organizations are crucial in trying to reverse the extremes of greed, if and only if they remember the value of *untu*. However, if leaders in these programs do not remember the humanism in human services, they will end up as agencies of the traditional powerful employers exploiting *untu's* labor as usual (Kisubi, 1999).

### **Self-Advocacy**

Helping can be inhuman if it is one-sided, directed, and indoctrinating. If it does not allow people to think independently, if it only gives ready-made answers, or orders people

around, if it prepares people only for different functions instead of broadening their horizons and thereby their freedom, it is inhuman. Every manipulation of people, even if it is done in their own interest, is suspect to humanism and human services. To think for others and to free them from their responsibilities and obligations is also inhuman. The new human services organizations should give their clients the ability to choose. This way human services confirm in the highest way the value of *mntu* as *mntu* by empowering all bantu to struggle for themselves, instead of doing it for them (Kisubi, 1999).

Without the humanist, empathetic spirit of human services, and the humanist concept of *mntu*'s ever-striving spirit, there is no authentic belief of *mntu* as the highest value (Kisubi, 1999). Without empathy there is no belief that *mntu* as *mntu* is at all possible and really exists. With empathy and a strong belief in *mntu* as *mntu* "human services are accountable to the customers" (Ericksen, 1977, p. 9).

Self-advocacy took hold as an international movement toward the end of the twentieth century (Buchanan & Walmsley, 2006). The Council for Standards in Human Services Education and the Human Services Research Institute proposed "participant empowerment" as the first skill standard for direct care providers (Taylor, Bradley, & Warren, 1996). According to Hall (1999), "Self-advocates move policy discussions beyond topics of economics to include other quality of life dimensions that are often overlooked, but are important in systems change" (p.1).

Therefore, the people who consume human services have the right to participate in services as, and if, they choose. Human services help is a service between equals. The consumers of services also have the right to an active role in evaluation and planning of services intended for their utilization. No aspect of human services should be hidden from the consumer. The

consumer should be in control. The core of human services is to bridge the gap between consumers and services.

To that end, consumer participation should be actively encouraged in all areas of service delivery. This is the true humanistic approach to the management of human need. The acknowledgment of the value of all people is the beginning of the practice of human services. It is also the key to understanding the real meaning of humanism and to sharing its essence with one another. Any profession or nation that loses the basic principles of humanism will reduce humans to mere machines set aside to produce goods and services and to be discarded upon retirement.

To make sure that all people are fed, housed, and clothed is of course a matter of great concern to human services workers who shudder to watch on TV the masses around the world that starve and are thirsty and undernourished. Humanist human services workers cannot afford to shrug their shoulders at the grotesque picture of the ravenous. It is against our belief in the principles of supporting the disadvantaged and the handicapped to help themselves. It is through exercising the moral decency of altruism that human services and humanists try to bring about the "gentler and kinder world order" that president Bush promised the world in 1989 as American troops were at war with Iraq. The unending wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the subsequent economic recession currently hurting millions in the US and around the world have shown that the "triumphant" system of international capitalism is a colossal failure. Its basic ideology is genocidal and destructive of the natural environment. It relies on a religious understanding that turns the West's most basic religious heritage on its head (Rivage-Seul & Rivage-Seul, 1995).

This monograph synthesizes the critical vision we think human services workers must develop in the face of the New World Order's gigantism. It argues in favor of replacing that New World Order with what we call a New Earth Order based on human welfare and environmental sustainability. Humanists and human services workers should be skeptical about and investigate through scientific research all claims of a paranormal and normal utopia, because if the ideas of some people were put into practice unexamined, the world would move further away from sanity. Ancient history gave us Emperor Caligula, just like our times gave us Hitler, Botha, Idi Amin, Abacha, Cedras, and drug dealers. What suffering these ideologies unleashed on their times and places! Utopia is not tangible enough as a playing field for human services work. It is only a radar for a teleological new day. For example, in the utopia described by Aldous Huxley (1932) in *Brave New World*, there would be no social problems and evenness, uniformity, and stability would reign everywhere. Serious humanists and human services workers find this to be a transcendental dream, opposed to empirical evidence. Because they would rather have the real world, humanists consciously or instinctively reject this vision as an example of general dehumanization. Humanists and human services workers know better than to believe in the futile yearning for such a world in our present time. That is why they advocate multiculturalism, diversity, sensitivity, and the ecological-environmental and systems approaches to individual and social problems.

*Muntu* is a product of biological, psychological, sociological, and politico-economic environments. This basic postulate of materialism served as the starting point for all subsequent theories in law and sociology, and for the practice of manipulating human beings, which reached monstrous proportions during the times of colonialism, Nazism, Stalinism, Aminism, Reaganomics, and, since the 1990s, "globalization". All other similar seductive theories of

society's priority over individuals, of *muntu*'s obligation to serve society and so forth, belong here as well (Kisubi, 1999).

*Muntu* must be an end, not a means. *Muntu* must serve *muntu*-self as a prerequisite to helping *muntu*-other. To help is to enable fellow *bantu* to help themselves. This is the ultimate meaning of humanism, the core philosophy of human services (Kisubi, 1999).

Human services and other helping professions are planned from the perspectives of an ideology, theory, or a set of values that drives their training programs, policies, ethics, and practice. Indeed values are a core dimension of human services education and practice. Ideological perspectives and values bestow legitimacy to human service organizations and underpin the commitment, and loyalties expected of a human services worker. Values help structure the behavior of individuals, groups, and communities. Therefore, human services educators should seek to pool their personal values with those of their colleagues and those they serve, in a continuous dialogue with each other, so that through a Socratic debate an eclectic ultimate ideology will be the professional mainstay, in some teleological new day.

Human services is a valuable tool to recover the dignity that is inherent in each of us, but the components of its normative emotive force must be recognized. Surrounding human services educational and community organizations there is capitalist ideology in a capitalist state such as the United States and socialist ideology in places such as China. Though the policies of these two differ, they have something in common. American public policy promotes capitalism and economic individualism, and the socialist policies in China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba promote government control of the economy, but both have citizens that fall through the cracks daily and need the warmth of human services.

## **Power and Empowerment**

Empowerment is about people, both men and women. It is a “collective undertaking, involving both individual change and collective action” (Young, 1993). Women’s empowerment means developing their ability to collectively and individually take control over their own lives, identify their needs, set their own agendas, and demand support from their communities and the state to see that their interests are responded to. In most cases the empowerment of women requires transformation of the division of labor and of society (United Nations Development Program, 2000).

### **Empowerment and What It Means**

Behind most attempts to increase women’s power has been the notion that power is a limited quantity: if you have more, I have less. If I have power over you, increasing your power comes at the expense of mine. According to this point of view, power is an either/or relationship of domination/subordination or *power over*. It is ultimately based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation, invites active and passive resistance, and requires constant vigilance to maintain.

There are alternatives. We can conceive of power as *power to*, power which is creative and enabling, the essence of the individual aspect of empowerment. Most people describe situations in which they felt powerful as those in which they solved a problem, understood how something works, or learned a skill.

Collectively, people feel empowered through being organized and unified by a common purpose or common understanding. *Power with* involves a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together.

Yet another kind of power is *power within*, the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect, which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals. In traditional cultures, shamans, healers, and wise elders were felt to have this type of power, and are often called on for advice. Use of the talking stick in North American native councils reflects appreciation of the power within every speaker.

Power over requires the creation of simple dualities: good/evil, man/woman, rich/poor, black/white, us/them. It is prone to restrictive cultural norms. It causes internal psychological conflict for those subordinated either by individuals or by large systems. They feel powerless and they grieve the loss of their full (*buntu*) personhood. They feel they are being insulted by the machinations of the *power over* machinery. They feel it is unfair that they are not being trusted. Instead they are being looked down upon, and yet they are too embarrassed to say it out aloud. They are unprepared for the civil conflict that may ensue from repression and lack of recognition. It is the responsibility of human services workers to start consciousness raising organizations (O'Connor & Netting, 2009) to fight maladies such discrimination based on gender, socioeconomic status, race, age, sexual orientation, and physical and cognitive ability, discrimination that is normally sustained by command and control *power over* structures.

But *power within* recognizes the strengths and weaknesses that exist in all of us and does not automatically condemn difference, or categorize in either/or terms. *Power within* stresses self-acceptance and self respect, complementariness rather than duality, and recognition of aspects of the other in us. *Power within* gives one the feeling of being on top of things and builds confidence in knowledge and skills. External resources enhance it. Therefore, human services workers enhance their consumers' *power within* by giving them power to succeed and achieve

goals. Human services workers boost consumers' morale by recognizing and acknowledging consumers' efforts. Consumers feel appreciated when human services providers open up opportunities for them through which they can use their gifts. Through scientific inquiry and humanistic skepticism, human services professionals challenge cultural norms and acquire new relevant knowledge and skills to ensure the good life for members of their community and beyond.

In a gender context, women and men are socialized differently and often function in different spheres of the community, although there is overlap and interdependence. As a result, women and men have different life experiences, knowledge, perspectives, and priorities. One cannot necessarily represent the interests of the other, and neither alone can fully represent their community. A healthy society will appreciate and value the positive aspects of these differences, and use them for its betterment.

Strategically, we need to transform our understanding of power and resist *power over* creatively, as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. did, through non-violence. We need to explore the concepts of *power to*, *power with*, and *power within* and their inter-relationship. In human services development work, this means building individual and collective conflict resolution skills, strengthening organizations, and building individual and collective skills and solidarity. Since 1990, the international community has worked to empower women in development and redress the omissions of the first United Nations (UN) Development Decade.

The first UN Development Decade was launched by the General Assembly in December 1961. It called on all member states to intensify their efforts toward self-sustaining economic growth and social advancement in the developing countries:

Originally women were seen purely as recipients of welfare. But they are providers to the household and, without effort to help them generate income, family wellbeing could not improve. Whether by food production, petty manufacture or trading, or by assuring them a role in decision-making, women needed to exert more control in the economic sphere for there to be special impacts - improved child health, and nutrition, higher enrollment for children in school - from increased productivity." (Black, 2007, pp. 68-9)

Over the years, human services development workers realized the significance of gender in creating differentials in opportunities for men and women. Journal articles on gender issues and United Nations specialized agency reports from around the world reported on the imbalances between men and women. Through observation of male and female interaction and looking at census and other vital statistics, such as health records and school entrance and performance records, development workers realized that gender was a factor in determining the differential access of men and women to the benefits and failures of the development process.

Through disaggregation of data, vulnerability assessment, and social surveys of the impact of development on men, women, boys, and girls, human services workers concluded that the Women in Development (WID) policies had to change to put gender initiatives at the forefront in order to empower women. Thus, they should view the world differently and focus on Gender in Development (GID) as a priority. While WID assumed homogeneity in people's needs, GID accounted for gender, age, and other differentials as the core of the development process (Moffat, Geadah, & Stuart, 1991).

Subsequently, since the 1973-1983 United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, development policy has focused on empowering women to greater self-

determination and changing their social position by challenging existing structural blocks and inequalities in the law. There was a need for alternative approaches to power.

For example the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) launched its 2002-2007 Gender and Development Plan of Action to promote gender equality in the access to, control over, and management of natural resources and agricultural support services. Other development agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also mainstreamed gender in the form of multicultural programs in the developing world, where gender equality was not as advanced as in the developed world. (Mainstreaming gender is related to the postmodernist theory that values looking at and valuing differences and diversity. This is also a central ethical principle in human services).

The movement to consider gender relations or power relations based on gender led to an increased acceptance by men and women of women as community decision makers, and led to greater personal and economic independence and self-confidence for women. This increased women's involvement in personal, family, and community development and led to new, more visible, and more effective women's organizations. More women in education and training programs improved the health of women and children and women's legal status. There was a decline in violence against women and increased women's control over their own fertility. GID reduced institutional discrimination and bias against women and increased public awareness of women's issues. Gender equality is not only a goal in its own right, but also an important means for realizing all the Millennium Goals envisioned in 2000 by the members of the United Nations as a holistic model that can address poverty eradication by refocusing nation-states on ensuring that all boys and girls have equal access to education (World Bank, 2004; United Nations, 2004).

Given the enormous need for education and healthcare for men and women in the developed and developing world, it is clear that human services development workers need to do more advocacy and program planning in order to realize some of the Millennium Development Goals by the target year 2015 (The United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2008). We also need to empower all minorities, meaning those without power in society. This call is particularly central to human services as a means to the end of empowering *muntu* to be *muntu*, under the soothing care of every human services professional.

### **Why Call for Humanist Human Services Education and Practice?**

As hinted above, the assumptions directing most current human services planning are essentially materialistic. That is to say, the purpose of helping individuals and groups is defined in terms of the successful cultivation of the means for achieving material prosperity, which have, for better or worse, already come to characterize the developed world. Modifications in humanist discourse do indeed occur, accommodating differences of culture and differential natural endowment, and responding to the alarming dangers posed by human rights abuses. Yet the underlying materialistic assumptions remain essentially unchallenged. However, as the 21st century matures, it is no longer possible to believe that the approaches to human services to which the materialistic conception of life has given rise are capable of meeting all of clients' needs. Optimistic forecasts about the changes economic development and modernization through globalization would generate in both the developing and developed world have vanished into an ever-widening abyss that separates the living standards of a small and relatively diminishing minority from the poverty experienced by the vast majority of the globe's population (Stiglitz, 2003, 2007).

This unprecedented economic crisis, together with the social break down it has helped to

engender, reflects a profound error of conception about human nature itself. The levels of response elicited from human beings by incentives of the prevailing order are not only inadequate, but seem almost irrelevant in the face of the world events. We are being shown that, unless humanism and human services find a purpose beyond the mere amelioration of material conditions, they will fail to attain even these goals. That purpose must be sought in passionate dimensions of life and in motivation that transcends a constantly changing economic landscape and an artificially imposed division of human societies into "developed" and "developing."

As the purpose of human services and humanism is being redefined, it is necessary to re-examine assumptions about the appropriate roles to be played by the protagonists in the process. The crucial role of government, at whatever level, requires no elaboration. Future generations, however, will find it almost incomprehensible that, in an age paying tribute to an egalitarian philosophy and related democratic principles (which coincide with the principles of humanism and human services), development planning should treat the masses of humanity essentially as recipients of benefits from aid and training.

Despite acknowledgement of participation as a principle, most of the world's population is limited to a range of choices formulated by agencies inaccessible to them and determined by goals that are often irreconcilable with their perceptions of reality. This approach is even endorsed, implicitly or explicitly, by established religion and some human services professions. Burdened by traditions of paternalism and prevailing theocratic thought, religious human services delivery systems seem incapable of translating an expressed faith in the spiritual dimensions of human nature into confidence in *muntu's* capacity to transcend material conditions (Kisubi, 1999).

In this state of anomie in the world, where human affairs are riddled with empty rhetoric

about a better tomorrow, especially by those benefiting from the status quo, human services and humanists must pick up the pieces. Their task to create the good life constitutes a challenge to fundamentally reshape all of society's institutions into what Paul Kurtz (1989) calls "Eupraxophy Institutions" (p. 1). The protagonists to whom the challenge addresses itself are all the inhabitants of the planet: the generality of humankind, members of governing institutions at all levels, persons serving in agencies of international coordination, scientists, social thinkers (viz, humanists and human services workers), all those endowed with artistic talents or with access to the media of communication, and leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The response must be based on an unconditional recognition of the oneness of humankind, a commitment to the establishment of justice as the organizing principle of society, and the determination to exploit to their utmost the possibilities that a systematic dialogue between the scientific and religious genius of the race can bring to the building of *mntu's* capacity. The enterprise requires a radical rethinking of most of the concepts and assumptions currently governing social and economic life. It must be wedded, as well, to a conviction that, however long the process and whatever setbacks may be encountered, the governance of human affairs can be conducted along lines that serve *mntu's* real needs (Kisubi, 1999).

A profound conviction that humans can better their lives and those of others inspires great intentions and feats in human services. In addition to maintaining a commitment to objective methods of inquiry for evaluating truth claims by reference to evidence and rationality, human services is committed to empowering the individual. To all those who recognize a desire to serve the familiar prompting from within their hearts, one student's words bring assurance. She believes that human services in this matchless day have professionals and resources fully equal to the challenge: "I would hopefully like to make our world a better place to live, whether

for a single person or for a group of people. I would like to help people make positive changes in their lives in whatever way I can.” (E. Kettner, personal communication, February 22, 2011).

At this point in our times, the human services field provides many opportunities to serve others, and the need for services is overwhelming. However, it is unrealistic to imagine that the vision of the next stage in the advancement of human services can be formulated without a searching reexamination of the attitudes and assumptions that currently underlie approaches to the improvement of *muntu's* life (Kisubi, 1999).

According to human services literature, at the most obvious level such rethinking has focused on addressing practical matters of policy, resource utilization, planning procedures, implementation methodologies, and organization, and not on its philosophical foundations. Yet, in the 21st century, especially with the reinventing of government, which characterizes political debate these days, fundamental issues related to which long-term goals to pursue have quickly emerged. The creation of social structures, the development of principles of justice, and the nature and role of knowledge in effecting enduring change require human services professional solutions. Indeed such a discussion is driven to seek a broad consensus of understanding about human nature itself. It is a philosophical discussion such as the one pioneered by this chapter.

As the world redefines itself, humanism and human services will have to redefine themselves too, in order to have existential significance. All protagonists will have to constantly ask themselves and each other, "How does one go about committing oneself to a point of view? How shall we proceed beyond words and principles to really make our world a better place? How will each one begin to take an infinite interest in one's life and act inwardly with passion for others? Above all, how shall we avoid the temptations of old time religion especially at this time of post-modernism?"

To answer these questions rationally or empirically is the present and future challenge to humanism and human services. The transformation in the way that great numbers of ordinary people, especially the oppressed, are coming to see themselves (a change that is dramatically abrupt in the perspective of the history of civilization) raises fundamental questions about the role assigned to humanists and human services professionals in planning new epistemologies and modalities for helping in the future. Humanists and human services professionals must, therefore, continue to empower themselves through Socratic dialectics and scientific methods. We must encourage ourselves to cultivate an existential sense of commitment and ignite the passion to learn and teach new "truths" as the world transforms itself. This means we must become exemplars by living our beliefs in searching and researching, because life unexamined is not worth living. Existential passion as a guide to our own lives will be the affirmation of our commitment to humanism, especially in human services.

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